

TOWN OF WALDEN PLAN



10.07.2021 DRAFT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Citizens of Walden

Prepared for the Town of Walden by:

COMMON GROUND URBAN DESIGN + PLANNING

with

KCI TECHNOLOGIES, INC.
ZANETTA ILLUSTRATION



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PLAN

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October 4, 2021

To: Walden Residents & Friends
From The Land Use Committee & Mayor Lee Davis

Re: Walden Town Plan

Land use plans are typically updated by municipalities with a cadence of about every five years. Walden had not updated its plan in over two decades. In some states surrounding Tennessee, the updates are mandatory. We are very pleased with the consultant team who has developed this new plan for our town.

The new plan recognizes past planning efforts, but many were not implemented, particularly related to Taft Highway improvements and sewer service expansion that have been tied up due to funding and system constraints. Those remain opportunities without easy solutions.

The plan is intended to guide both Walden officials and developers through the vision and design elements of the plans, plus updated zoning and ordinances to help steer alignment. While the plan has few suggested changes to the traditional residential neighborhoods of Walden, there are several elements in the plan that we are excited about including:

- A “sense of place” for the town of Walden through design changes and landscape elements along Taft Highway in the town center area
- Improved traffic flow via traffic circles at the Anderson Pike / Taft Highway intersection leading up from the W Road and at the challenging intersection of Fairmount Avenue and Taft Highway
- In the largely open space on the west side of Taft Highway, the consultant has envisioned a walkable / bikeable mixed use town center and neighborhood that allows for small scale shops and restaurants, plus a range of housing that can help serve the needs of citizens.
- The new town center and neighborhood follows the contours of the land and avoids development of extreme slopes
- Improved pedestrian access to Walden’s recreational assets including the Pumpkin Patch and McCoy Farm & Garden
- Way finding (signage) to assist visitors to locate the key cultural destinations within Walden, along with efforts to address the parking issues at trailheads

Land Use Committee Members:
Steven Bush, Angela Cassidy, Andrew Hausler, Sarah McKenzie, and Dawson Wheeler

Lee Davis,
Mayor




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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

“The long plateau known as Walden’s Ridge, near the tip end of the Appalachian Mountain range, has always beckoned travelers to stay a while and enjoy the quiet woods, rippling streams, and majestic, breathtaking views.”

—Mary Scott Norris and Priscilla N. Shartle in Images of America, Signal Mountain

The heart of Walden, Tennessee is at a literal and figurative crossroads. It has been 24 years since the completion of its last Land Use Plan—a plan for all of Walden’s Ridge that included Signal Mountain and the unincorporated portions of Hamilton County. It has been 23 years since the Walden Town Center Plan was completed, which focused on creating a center for the Town near its literal crossroads of Taft Highway and Anderson Pike, and the W Road. Since that time, the quiet, primarily residential community has continued to hum along. New development has been minimal and mostly confined to residential updates and some new construction. However, development pressure in Walden exists, as evidenced by recent controversial development proposals and over the past couple of decades. Moreover, as existing long-time businesses close and large undeveloped parcels are acquired, there is concern from the community as to what happens next, what it should look like, or whether it is appropriate at all. Combined with concerns such as the environment, the preservation of Walden’s character, infrastructure, and even the loss of tax revenue, the question of growth and change becomes a complex one.

The quote from *Images of America, Signal Mountain* on the opposite page still expresses the draw that Walden continues to have for its citizens today. The natural beauty of Walden’s woods, streams, waterfalls and ridges is still

a primary factor of enjoyment for its citizens. This plan, while offering suggestions for areas for potential development recognizes the desire of the citizens to pursue any development first and foremost within the constraints of the natural environment already in place within Walden. To state this position simply, any proposed development must work with the natural environment within its location. While some manipulation is expected it should not be for the sake of development, i.e. the natural environment must remain a primary consideration and developed around and with and not over or destroyed.

For these reasons, the community has embarked on an effort to revisit its long-range planning and endeavor to define a clear path forward for the next twenty years. Walden is at its figurative crossroads. This document is Walden’s plan. While the plan is comprehensive and townwide in some respects, the focus of this effort is the Taft Highway corridor from Anderson Pike near James Boulevard to just north of the Pinecrest Baptist Church. This plan is simply a blueprint, however. The plan will not implement itself. Some of the concepts in this plan can be implemented immediately. Others will take additional study and evaluation. All will take time and resources. Once adopted, the Town must use the plan as a basis for decisions by leaders on a variety of growth and community-related issues. Ultimately, plan implementation depends on leadership and community commitment.

A SNAPSHOT OF WALDEN
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

A brief historical overview of Walden’s develop- ment is helpful in catching a glimpse of Walden today. With the 1819 Hiwassee Purchase, land north of the Tennessee River was opened to settlers. Originally occupied by the Cherokee and Creek Native American tribes, the area that would eventually become Walden’s Ridge, and more specifically Walden, would soon be covet- ed for its springs and the promise of refuge from a young Chattanooga and its threat of disease. What began as the farms of the Levi and Mabbitt families evolved into an elevated oasis.

Several important figures helped to settle the area. In the 1870s, the Key family, frequent visi- tors during pandemics, purchased land and con- structed two log cabins giving birth to Walden’s forerunner, the community of Summertown. Da- vid Key was an elected judge, a U.S. Senator, and eventually the Postmaster General. In the early 1910s, another eventual U.S. Senator, Nathan Bachman, purchased a farm south of Summ- ertown. Bachman served in the Senate beginning in 1933 until his sudden death in 1937. The school, a community center today, was named in his honor. The Bachman farm was extensive

with an orchard and large garden—the bounty from which was often shared with people on the mountain. Nathan Bachman’s daughter, Martha Bachman McCoy, stayed on the mountain her entire life and donated the farm to the Town of Walden upon her death in 2004.

From the beginning, Walden was a community of cabins, boarding houses, and farms, but it wasn’t easy to access. Travel was provided by horse-drawn carriage in the early days, and the trip took two to four hours depending on wheth- er you were going down or up, respectively. The late 19th century brought the famed “W” Road, which still exists perilously today. Taft High- way eventually replaced Anderson Pike as the main artery through Walden. For more than six decades, unincorporated Summertown and sur- rounding areas continued to flourish as a quiet, remote, rural mountain community. Seeking to be a distinct municipality from nearby Signal Mountain, the Town of Walden was incorporated in 1975. Families have always been attracted to Walden, and the addition of Signal Mountain High School in 2008 made the area even more attractive. In the 1990s, Walden restricted much of the land within its boundary to two-acre min- imum single-family residential lots. This move ensured the Town would remain a relatively low-density community for years to come.

“The people came not as founders, but as refugees, and the community was called Summertown be- cause it was just that. It grew and flourished and was loved because the spirit of God was amongst its people, between man and God, and between man and man.”

-Elizabeth B. Patten in “Lest We Forget” in *The Little Brown Church in the Wildwood*



The W Road circa 1895

POPULATION, HOUSEHOLDS, AND AGE

The population of Walden has been fairly con- sistent over the past twenty years, hovering around 2,000. At the time of this writing, the Town is still waiting on the results of the 2020 census, but the American Community Survey estimates indicate a slight increase in popula- tion since 2010. Similarly, the total number of households is expected only slightly to change in the same period.

Population



2010: 1,898 (Census)
2019: 1,948 (ACS)

3% increase in population since 2010

Housing Units



2010: 799 (Census)
2019: 815 (ACS)

96% of Walden’s housing units are single-family.

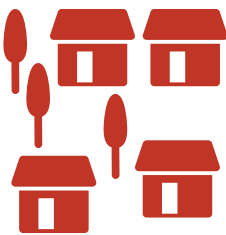
Family Households



2010: 586 (Census)
2019: 550 (ACS)

6% decrease in families since 2010

Total Households

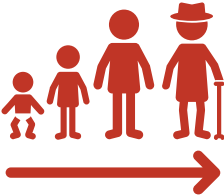


2010: 737 (Census)
2019: 744 (ACS)

1% increase in households since 2010

While the number of households and housing units has seen a small increase, the number of family households has declined over the past ten years.

Median Age



2010: 44.6 (Census)
2019: 46.2

4% increase in median age since 2010

Ages 65 and Over

2010: 309 or 16% of the population
2019: 412 or 21% of the population

33% increase residents 65+

OTHER FACTORS OF INTEREST

Walk Score®

Walkscore, owned by Redfin, is a walkability index for communities. Using a scale of 0-100, it scores the walkability of a place based on various factors. Walden has a Walkscore of 0, meaning that it is car-dependent for almost all daily needs.



Using a scale of 0-100, the AARP Livability Index rates the livability of a community based on seven different categories. Walden's Livability Index score is 51 with the following individual category scores.

Housing: 40
Transportation: 39
Environment: 73
Health: 49
Engagement: 67
Opportunity: 56

It should be noted that it is nearly impossible to achieve a perfect score in either of these indices. However, they are helpful in comparing what a community might desire and what is actually on the ground.

What Are People Seeking Nationwide?

In 2020, the National Association of Realtors conducted its National Community and Transportation Preferences Survey. Two surveys were completed, one pre-pandemic and one post. Here are a few results of note from the post-pandemic survey:

- 76% of respondents say being within walking distance of shops and parks is important
- 85% say sidewalks and places to take walks are important
- For respondents that feel walkability is important, 58% said they would be willing to spend more to live where parks, shops, and restaurants are within walking distance
- Over 50% of respondents preferred communities with a mixture of housing types and walkability

What Do Walden Residents Think?

In 2019, 178 people responded to a Land Use Planning survey initiated by the Town. The results showed that an overwhelming majority are satisfied with Walden as a place to live. There was support for maintaining the Town's rural, residential character; however, questions related to Taft Highway and future development were a bit more mixed. Some of the more interesting highlights from the survey include:

- 74% and 53% of respondents identified walking trails and sidewalks as mobility needs, respectively
- 46% of respondents—more than twice that of the other answers—felt being open to reasonable commercial growth is a good way to offset the loss of the Hall Income Tax revenue that was ended
- 52% of respondents indicated a desire to allow new residential subdivisions and condominiums/townhouses

As for the future development along Taft Hwy:

- 57% preferred establishments with outdoor dining
- 45% preferred walkable village-style development
- Only 24% of respondents preferred suburban-style development

What Does All of This Mean for Walden?

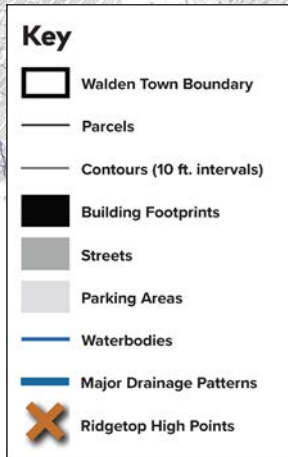
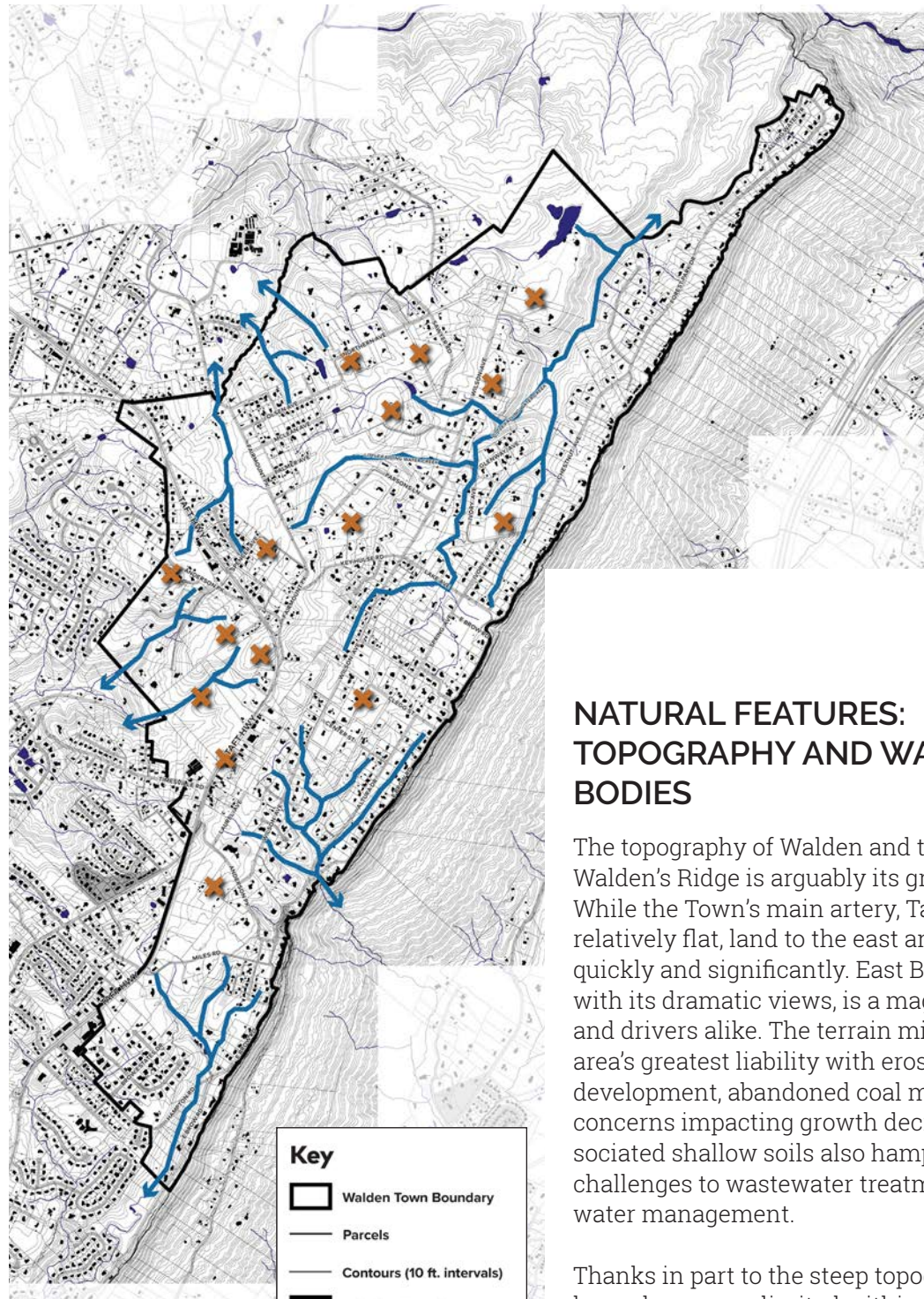
Walden's local trends indicate marginal growth and an aging population, which is not in and of itself a bad thing. It does, however, signal the need to consider the effect of such trends. Aging in place is the notion that one can grow older within the community they live and have invested much of their lives. Coupled with the national trends toward housing choice, walkability, and the desire to live within close proximity to daily needs, one might question how Walden is responding to these trends.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

Before developing the Town of Walden Plan, the consultant team conducted a study of existing conditions to understand opportunities and constraints to future growth better. The following pages highlight these findings.



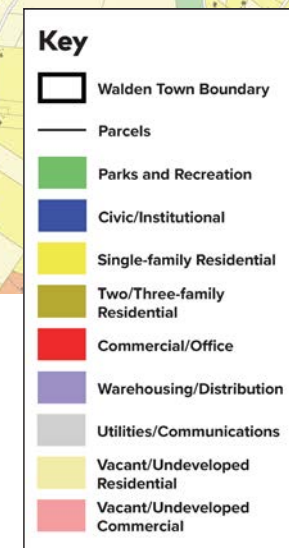
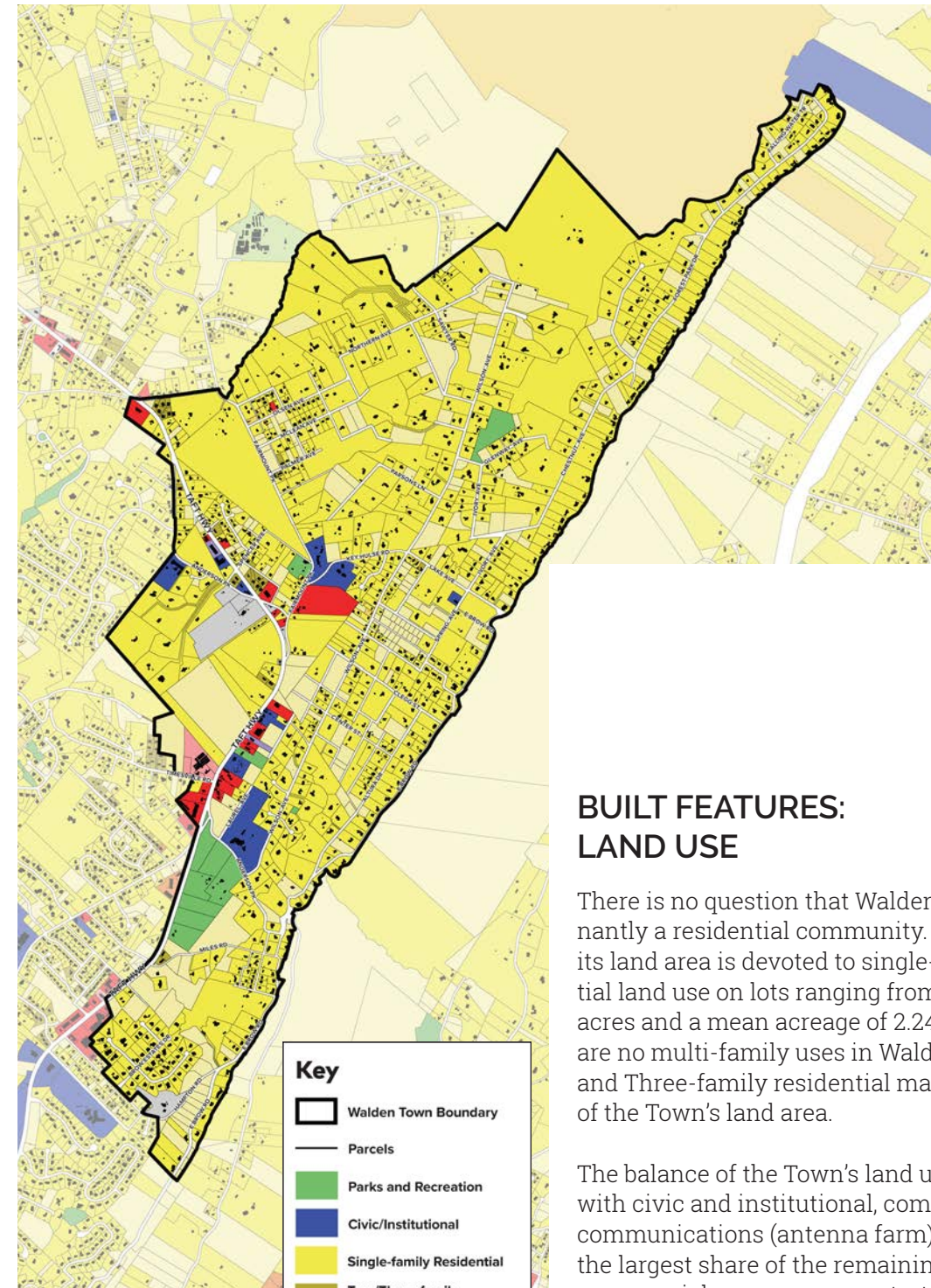
Walden's 2019 Land Use Survey and The National Association of Realtors annual national community preferences survey are aligned on several issues, including walkability.



NATURAL FEATURES: TOPOGRAPHY AND WATER BODIES

The topography of Walden and the greater Walden's Ridge is arguably its greatest asset. While the Town's main artery, Taft Highway, is relatively flat, land to the east and west can drop quickly and significantly. East Brow Road alone, with its dramatic views, is a magnet for walkers and drivers alike. The terrain might also be the area's greatest liability with erosion, hillside development, abandoned coal mines, and other concerns impacting growth decisions. The associated shallow soils also hamper growth with challenges to wastewater treatment and storm-water management.

Thanks in part to the steep topography, flood hazard areas are limited within the town's limits. Plenty of tributaries exist, however, and many drains feed into them. Middle Creek, Fairmount Branch, and Little Falling Water Creek are a few tributaries that carry stormwater runoff from the ridge top. Additionally, some of these tributaries serve as the path for sewer pipes that exist on the mountain.



BUILT FEATURES: LAND USE

There is no question that Walden is predominantly a residential community. Nearly 75% of its land area is devoted to single-family residential land use on lots ranging from 1 acre to 100 acres and a mean acreage of 2.24 acres. There are no multi-family uses in Walden, and Two- and Three-family residential make up about 1% of the Town's land area.

The balance of the Town's land uses are mixed with civic and institutional, commercial, and communications (antenna farm) uses, having the largest share of the remaining land area. The commercial uses are concentrated along the main artery, Taft Highway. Two small clusters of commercial uses exist north of Spencer Avenue and between Anderson Pike and Fairmount Pike at the bend in Taft Highway. An established non-residential pattern exists primarily on the east side of Taft Highway south of the bend to Anderson Pike/W Road.

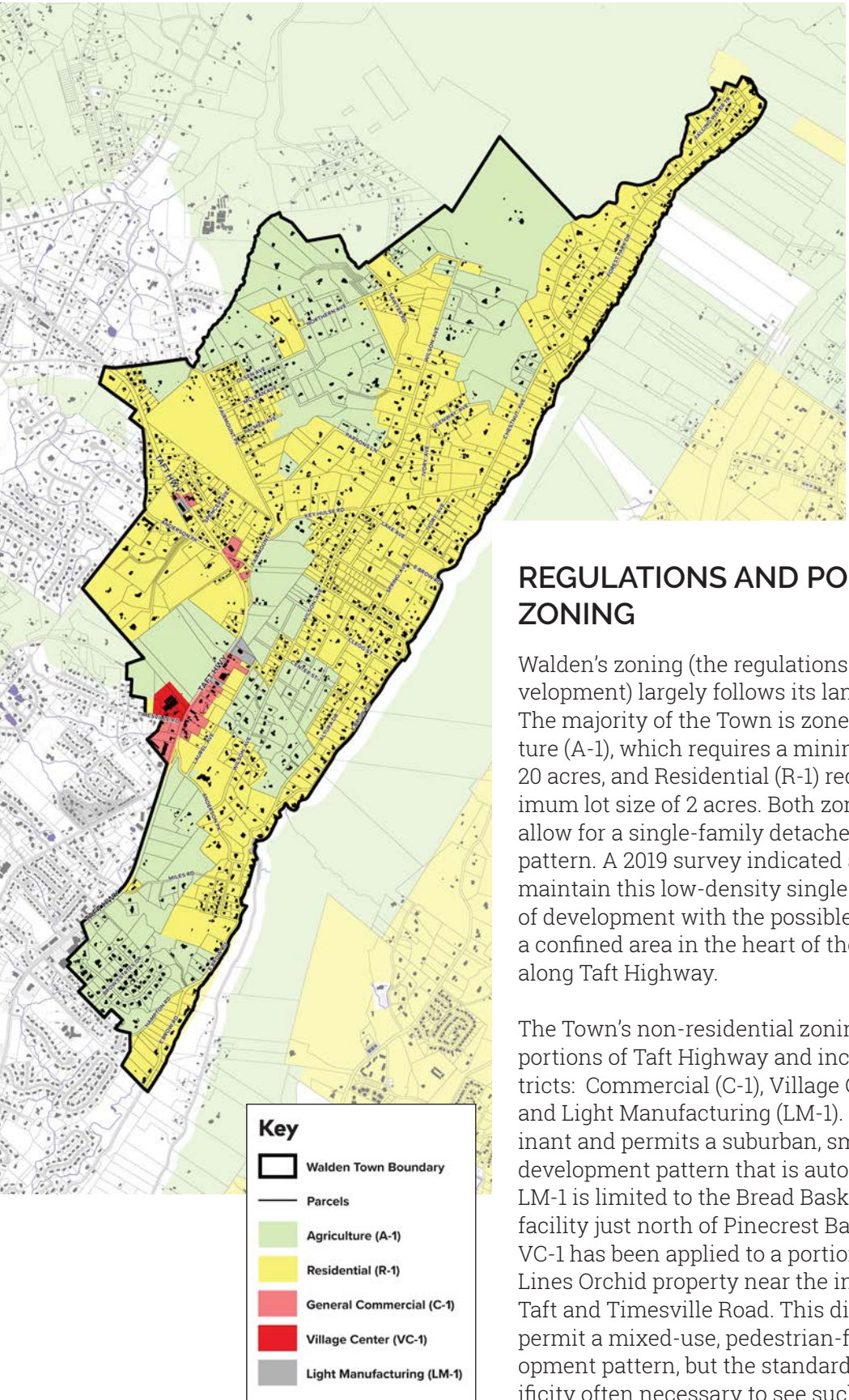
BUILT FEATURES:
DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

As primarily a residential community, the character of most of Walden is that of large lots, houses set back from the street and natural landscapes. The older residential and some of the new exhibit qualities similar to other historic mountain communities. Stone is used in foundations, walls, and often facades. Wood siding and shingles complement the masonry. House styles vary, but common details such as simple, deep overhangs, jerkinhead roofs, exposed rafters are prevalent. The houses and large lots are compliments to the narrow roads that serve them. These picturesque roads are narrow with swale drainage, and many serve as de facto sidewalks, often creating conflicts with automobiles.

What Walden lacks is an authentic, cohesive, walkable center. What most consider as the center of Walden is located along the east side of Taft Highway south of Fairmount Pike and north of Anderson Pike (near the W Road). Town Hall and the Pumpkin Patch are the centerpieces of this area, but the rest is a mixture of low-rise commercial buildings, converted or vacant residential, and the relatively new Fire Hall. Unlike the historic residential areas, there is not a distinctive character or architecture. There are no sidewalks, and the design and width of Taft Highway make the area feel very uncomfortable for anyone not in a car or inside a park or building. Additionally, some of the buildings are vacant, which lends to a sense of desolation.



Many residential and civic sites have a picturesque, mountain town feel (above) while sites along Taft Highway lack cohesion and are dominated by asphalt (left).



REGULATIONS AND POLICY:
ZONING

Walden’s zoning (the regulations governing development) largely follows its land use pattern. The majority of the Town is zoned for Agriculture (A-1), which requires a minimum lot size of 20 acres, and Residential (R-1) requires a minimum lot size of 2 acres. Both zoning districts allow for a single-family detached residential pattern. A 2019 survey indicated a preference to maintain this low-density single-family pattern of development with the possible exception of a confined area in the heart of the community along Taft Highway.

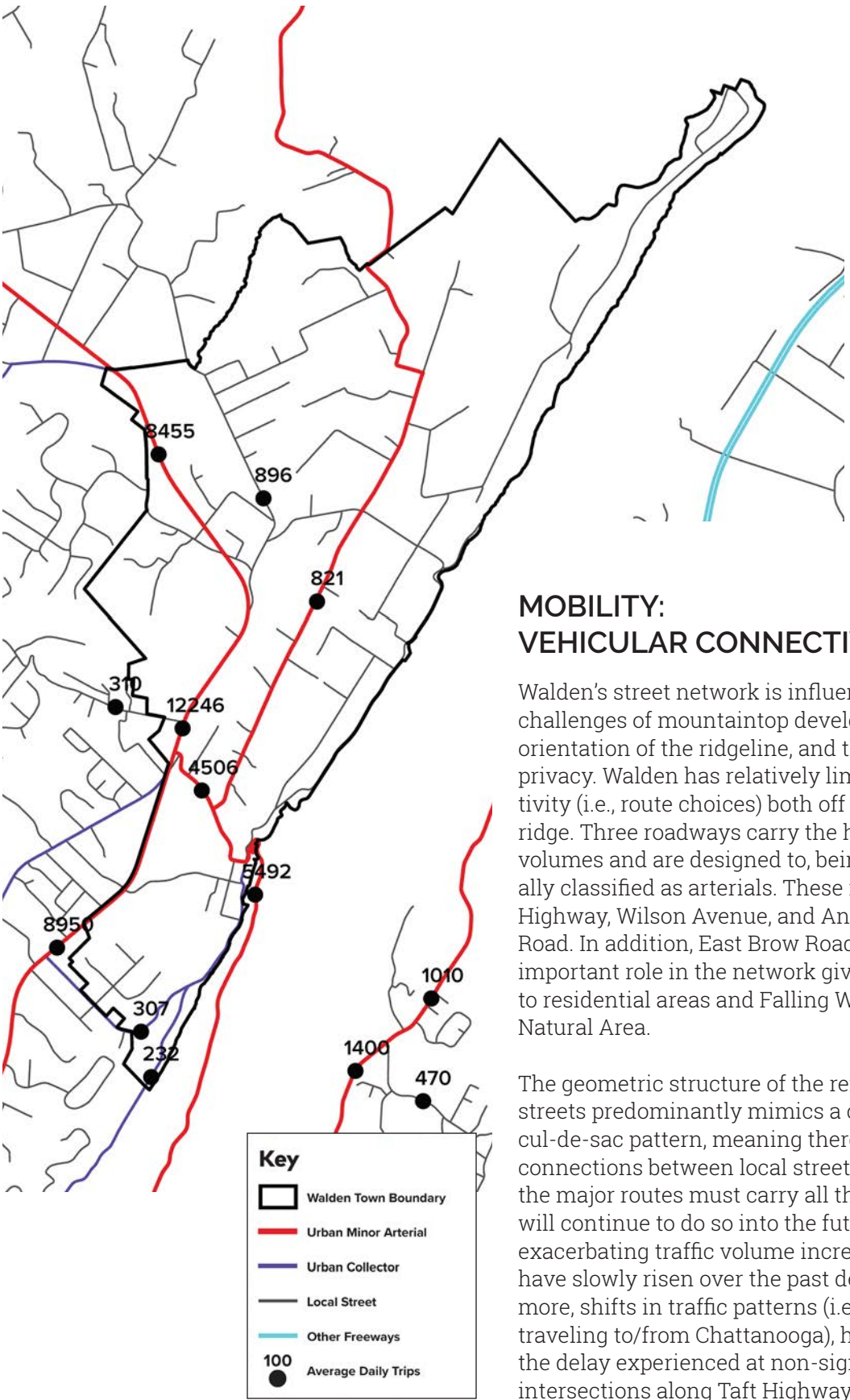
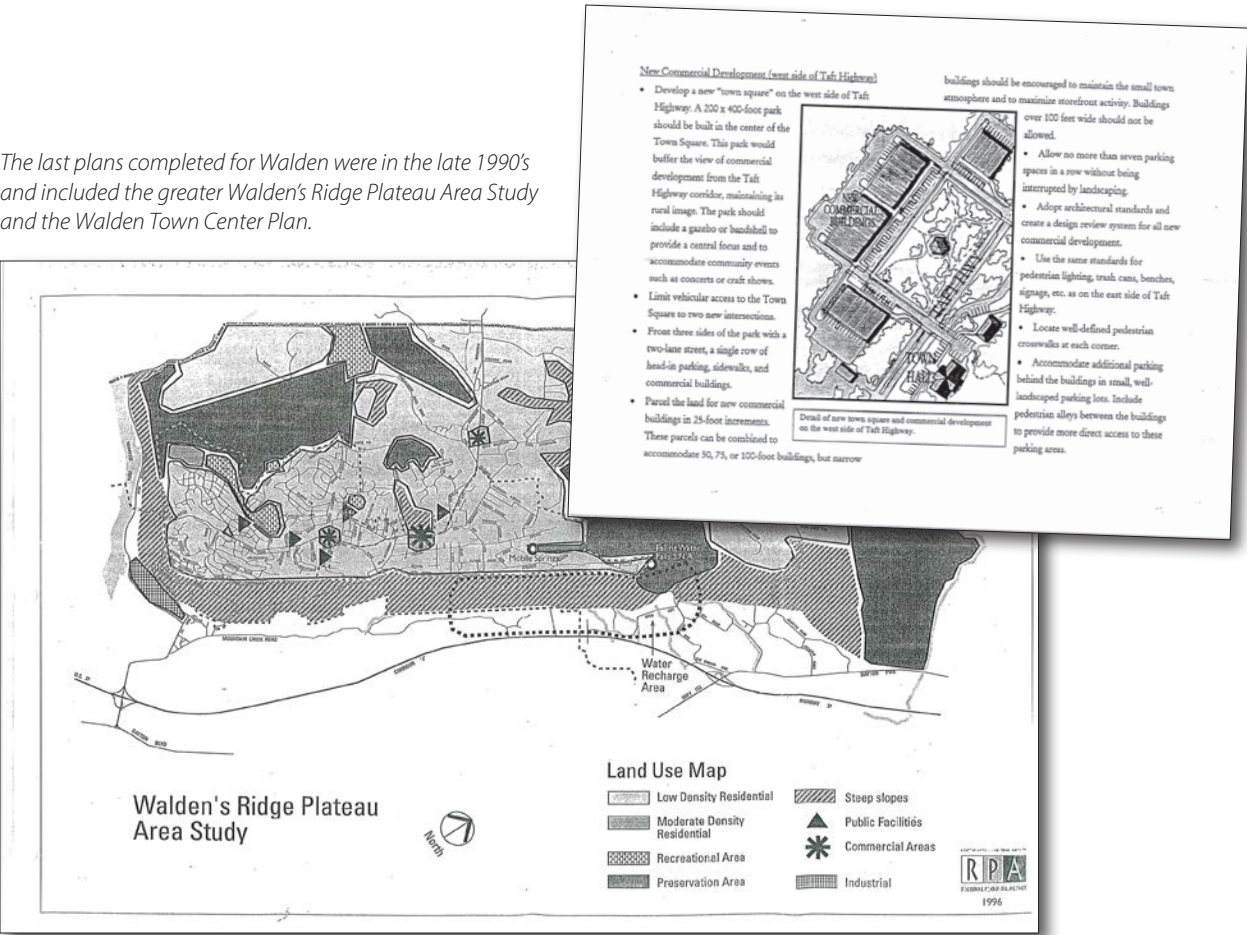
The Town’s non-residential zoning is limited to portions of Taft Highway and includes three districts: Commercial (C-1), Village Center (VC-1), and Light Manufacturing (LM-1). C-1 is predominant and permits a suburban, small footprint development pattern that is auto-dependent. LM-1 is limited to the Bread Basket and a storage facility just north of Pinecrest Baptist Church. VC-1 has been applied to a portion of the former Lines Orchid property near the intersection of Taft and Timesville Road. This district intends to permit a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development pattern, but the standards lack the specificity often necessary to see such development.

REGULATIONS AND POLICY:
PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, Walden's most recent land use planning efforts are the Walden's Ridge Area Plan and the Walden Town Center Plan from 1997 and 1998, respectively. The Walden's Ridge Area Plan included Signal Mountain and the unincorporated portions of Hamilton County. As for future development in Walden specifically, the plan envisioned a low-density residential character for the majority of the Town and the preservation of environmentally sensitive features. A walkable, commercial center with a mixture of uses was identified in the heart of Walden. Extension of sewer along Taft Highway was recognized as necessary to realize this vision, but that has not been implemented as of this writing. The lack of progress on this issue has been a key factor in limiting the development of a center.

The Walden Town Center Plan grew out of the Walden's Ridge Area Plan effort. The plan focused on creating a true center for the Town that hoped to tie together existing commercial area and new development on the west side of Taft Highway. The plan was developed with extensive public involvement. Key recommendations included streetscape improvements to the frontage road, the creation of a pedestrian-friendly "Town Square" on the west side of Taft fronted by modest scaled mixed-use buildings; and a focus on the improvement and expansion of parks and trails in the area to connect the Town Center with the rest of the Town. Walden's Town Center Plan became the basis for updates to the Town's zoning ordinance that led to the creation of the Village Center zoning district.

The last plans completed for Walden were in the late 1990's and included the greater Walden's Ridge Plateau Area Study and the Walden Town Center Plan.



MOBILITY:
VEHICULAR CONNECTIVITY

Walden's street network is influenced by the challenges of mountaintop development, the orientation of the ridgeline, and the desire for privacy. Walden has relatively limited connectivity (i.e., route choices) both off and on the ridge. Three roadways carry the heaviest traffic volumes and are designed to, being functionally classified as arterials. These include Taft Highway, Wilson Avenue, and Anderson Pike/W Road. In addition, East Brow Road plays an important role in the network given the access to residential areas and Falling Water Falls State Natural Area.

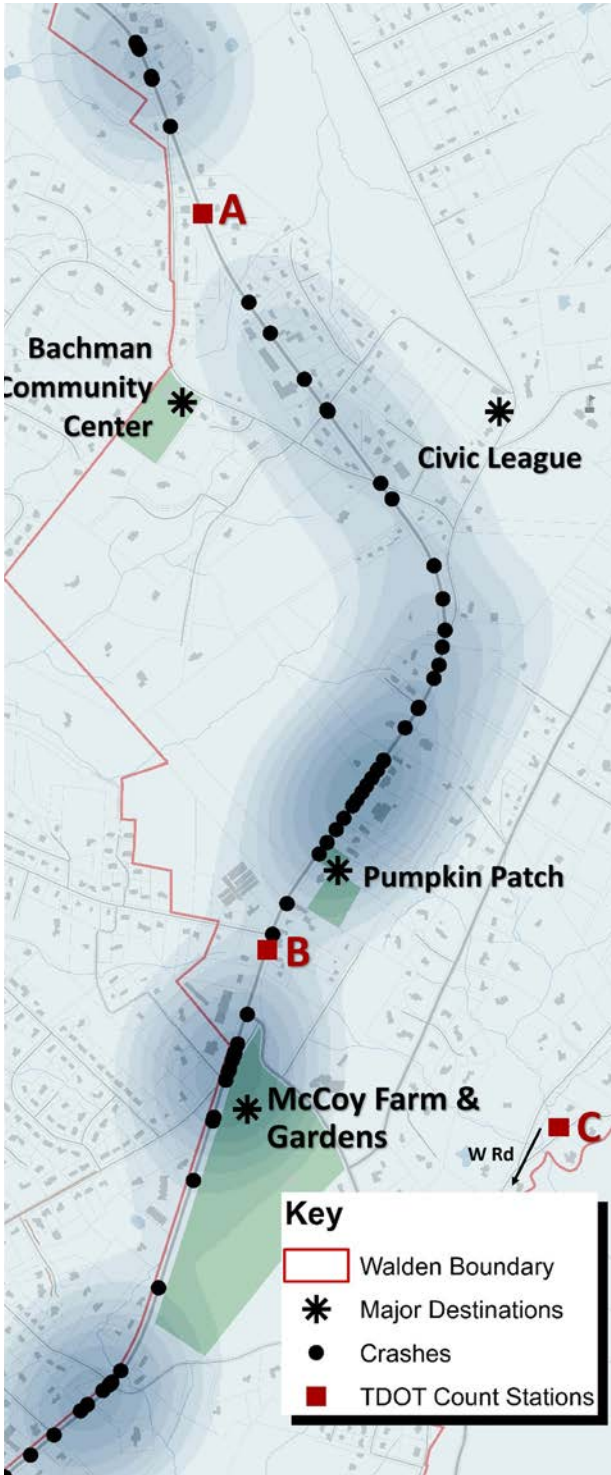
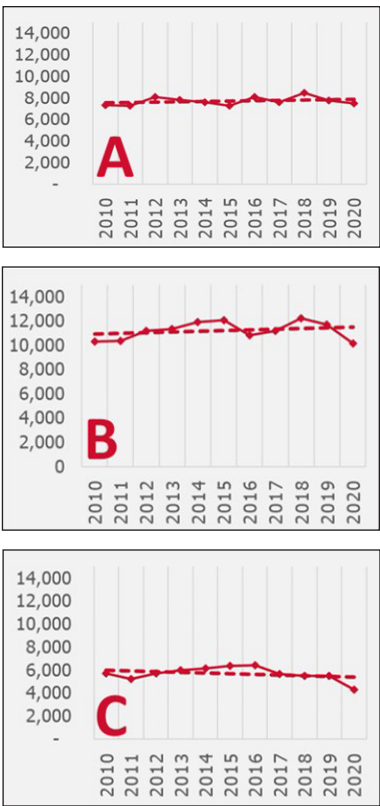
The geometric structure of the remaining streets predominantly mimics a conventional cul-de-sac pattern, meaning there is a lack of connections between local streets. Therefore, the major routes must carry all the traffic, and will continue to do so into the future, further exacerbating traffic volume increases, which have slowly risen over the past decade. Furthermore, shifts in traffic patterns (i.e., commuters traveling to/from Chattanooga), have increased the delay experienced at non-signal-controlled intersections along Taft Highway.

MOBILITY:
TAFT HIGHWAY

Taft Highway is a two-lane urban minor arterial state route facility that serves as the primary route on Walden's Ridge Plateau, connecting Sequatchie County, Walden, Signal Mountain, and the Chattanooga Valley. According to TDOT traffic count stations, the heaviest volumes in Walden are experienced near Timesville Road. Between 2010 and 2019, there was a 14% increase in the annual average daily traffic (AADT) at this location.

Between 2017-2019, there were 64 crashes along Taft Highway within the Town limits, two of which involved suspected serious injuries. The 2017-2019 crash rate, or the number of crashes compared to exposure (i.e., traffic volumes), was below the statewide average for a roadway of this type and context, although the severe crash rate was slightly higher. Crash "hotspots" along the corridor include the Anderson Pike/James Boulevard and Miles Road intersections, as well as near the Ace Hardware entrance.

TDOT traffic count stations along Taft Highway (A, B, and C) provide data on traffic volume between 2010 and 2020 (right). Data on crashes compared with state averages for similar road types (bottom right)



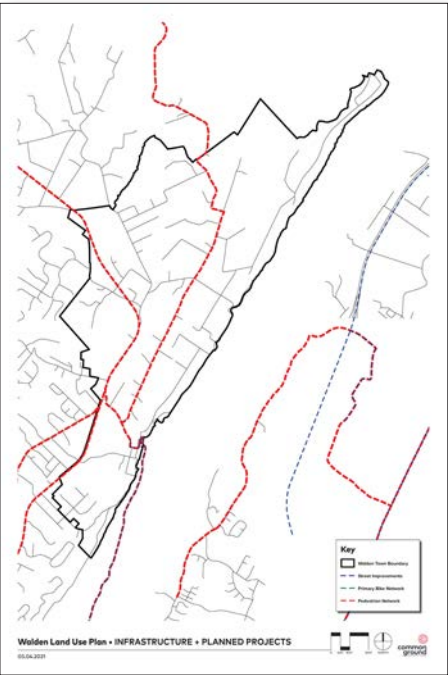
| Total Crash Rate | TN Average Crash Rate for Segment Type | Difference | Severe Crash Rate | TN Severe Crash Rate for Segment Type | Difference |
|------------------|--|------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1.995 | 2.507 | -0.51 | 0.084 | 0.083 | +0.001 |

REGULATIONS AND POLICY:
PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Regional Transportation Plan

There are several ways major projects are fed into the project development and construction process; however, a region's long-range transportation plan, the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in Walden's case, acts as a critical planning tool. Regionally significant studies and projects are identified, and funding assigned to create a fiscally constrained list to be implemented by 2045.

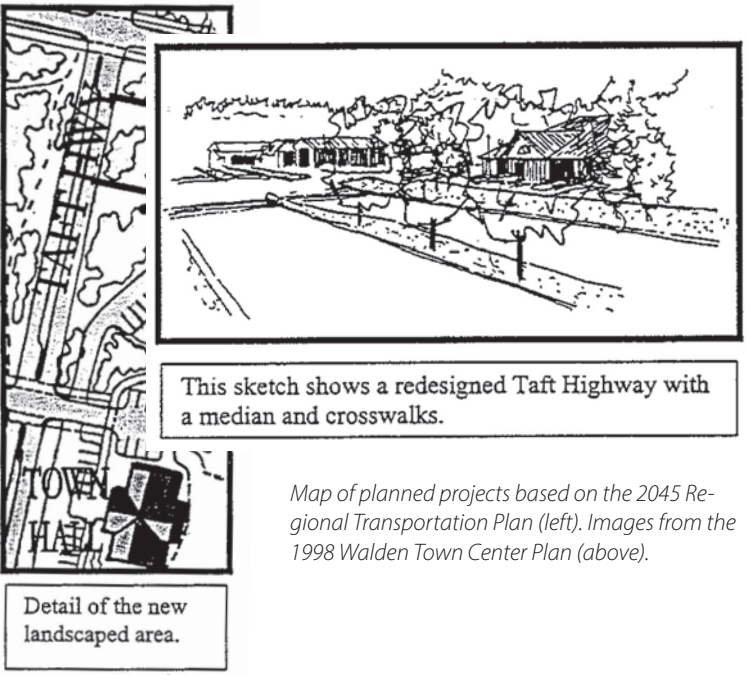
There are currently two projects on this list which impact Walden. First, TDOT will be evaluating the feasibility of a new roadway connection between Timesville Road and Shackelford Ridge Road during the 2021-2025 timeframe. The Town of Signal Mountain is providing the local funding match of 20% for this study. Second, \$7 million worth of preventative maintenance is identified for the W Road in the 2036-2045 timeframe. This project encompasses major repair work and does include smaller improvements, such as paving. TDOT is currently conducting a Road Safety Audit Review (RSAR) of the W Road to identify needed near-term spot safety improvements.



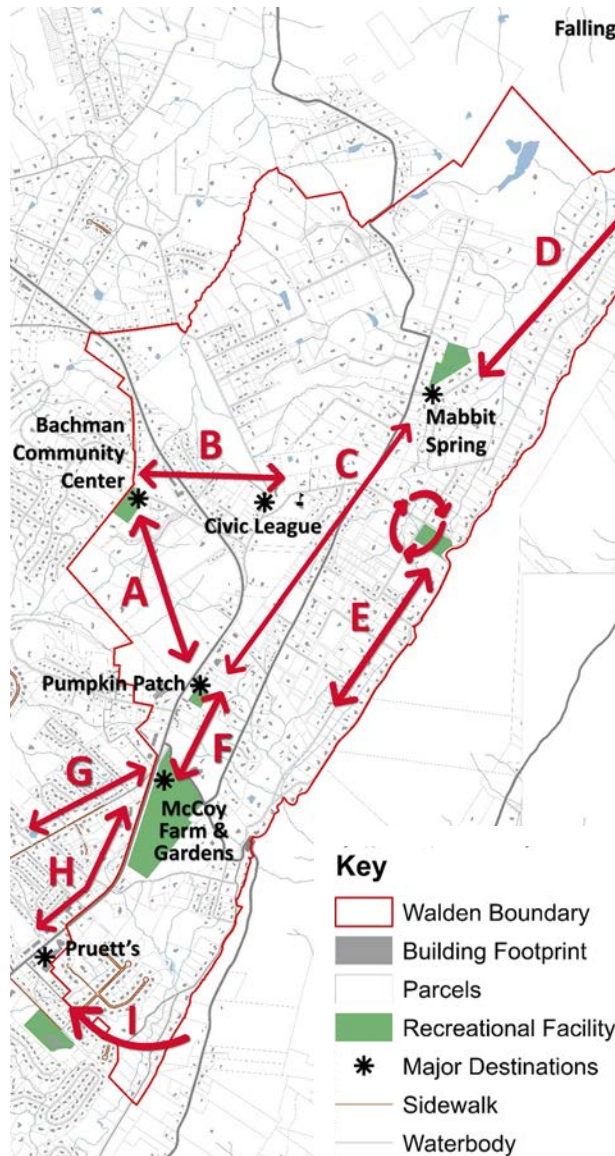
Sub-area and Town Center Plan

In addition to the RTP, two other Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA) plans influence land use and transportation decisions in Walden. These include the Walden's Ridge Plateau Area Plan, developed by the RPA in 1997, and Walden's Town Center Plan, which resulted from an extensive community planning effort in 1998.

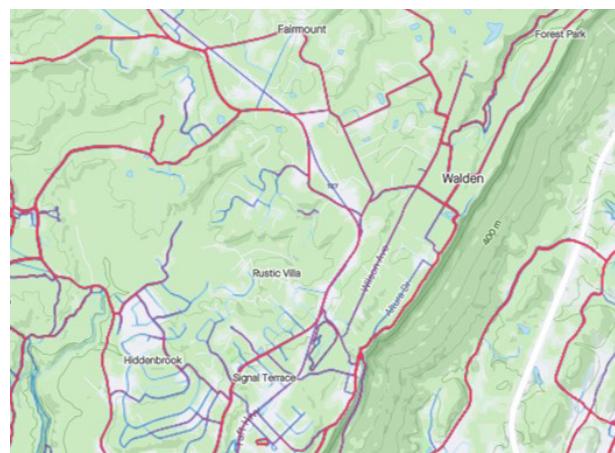
The Area Plan identifies the potential Timesville connector (previously mentioned) as important for improving emergency response times and general connectivity on the Plateau. Additionally, the plan identifies widening Taft Highway to four or five lanes. Counter to this recommendation, the Town Center Plan identified the desire to largely leave Taft Highway's two-lane cross-section as is, although with the addition of a center landscaped median for access and speed management and placemaking benefits. Frontage roads, or connections off-corridor, should instead be provided to separate local and regional traffic. Furthermore, residents identified roundabouts, safe crossings, and medians, in general, as being important mechanisms for slowing traffic down on Taft Highway in Walden's Town Center.



Map of planned projects based on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (left). Images from the 1998 Walden Town Center Plan (above).



STRAVA



MOBILITY: PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

The only dedicated infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists is the sidewalk network located in Brow Estates, a newer subdivision on the southside, as well as the soft-surface trails in Walden's open spaces. Despite this, Walden's streets are active with people walking and bicycling. Residents and visitors alike are attracted to the Plateau, in part, to be active. There is a noted presence of long-distance bicyclists who are drawn by the challenge of the W Road, scenic setting, and relatively low-volume roadways. Residents from all stages of life frequently walk Walden's residential streets, greeting their neighbors in these important public spaces. Visitors stroll shaded streets to access nearby trailheads. The personal trip-tracker app, Strava, shows especially high numbers of people walking and bicycling on roadways, such as East Brow Road, Lake Avenue, Wilson Avenue (north of Lake Avenue), Ivory Avenue, and Glenway Avenue.

Despite the number of active shared streets, there have been no reported pedestrian or bicycle crashes in the past 10 years in the town limits off the Taft Highway corridor. This does not, of course, include "near-misses." Two bicyclists were struck on Taft Highway near the Fairmount Pike intersection. Although not within Walden, a bicyclist was struck on the W Road just south of the town limits, while a pedestrian was hit in the vicinity of Ault Road and Taft Highway, near the location of an existing marked crosswalk across Taft Highway.



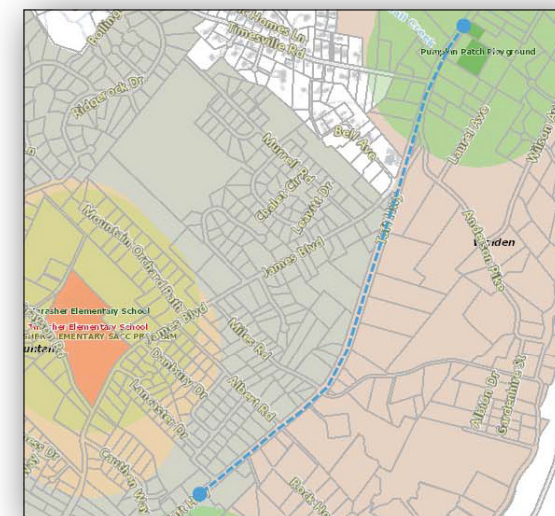
Walkers wearing reflective vests to alert drivers

REGULATIONS AND POLICY: PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
The RPA's Chattanooga Area Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, completed in 2010, identifies a desired future walking and biking network. While the projects are unfunded, pedestrian infrastructure is envisioned for Taft Highway, Wilson Avenue, and Anderson Pike/W Road, the community's arterial roadways. Bicycle infrastructure is identified for Taft Highway as part of the region's "primary and secondary bicycle network", although the type and design of these facilities are envisioned to be driven by local decisions.

For the past three TDOT Multimodal Access Grant cycles, the Town of Walden has submitted an application for funding assistance to construct a shared use path along Taft Highway. This pathway would provide a safe walking and bicycling connection between the Pumpkin Patch, Town Center, McCoy Farm and Gardens, and Elberfeld Drive/Signal Mountain town limits. The Town is anxiously waiting for TDOT's announcement of the 2021 grant recipients.



Bicycle/pedestrian facility identified along Taft Highway in the 2010 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (above). Proposed connection between McCoy Farm and Pumpkin Patch overlaid on map of town and state-owned property (right).

Sub-area and Town Center Plan

The Walden's Ridge Plateau Area Plan emphasizes the importance of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure for the Plateau. Supporting a high quality of life and relieving traffic on local streets are important reasons for providing safe and comfortable active transportation and recreation opportunities. The Town Center Plan heavily emphasizes the community's desire for safe walking and bicycling infrastructure, including trails, sidewalks, greenways, and crosswalks. In fact, trails/sidewalks were identified as the number 1 service or activity most needed in Walden. Additional needs and recommendations from this plan, include:

- Providing safe crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians across Taft Highway, including the potential for a tunnel or bridge;
- Utilizing Laurel Avenue for park and trail access, including potentially constructing a parking area adjacent to the Pumpkin Patch;
- Providing "loop trails" behind the businesses on the east side of Taft Highway by extending the Laurel Avenue connection to the proposed passive park at Fairmount Pike, envisioned to include walking trails and picnic areas.





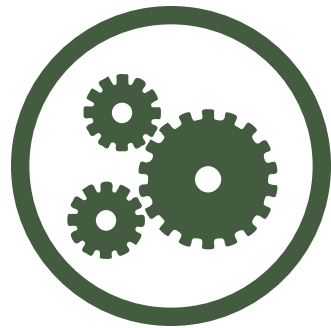
UNDERSTAND



PLAN



REFINE



IMPLEMENT

PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Walden Plan was created through a simple four-step planning process.

UNDERSTAND

Available data related to the project was inventoried and analyzed to determine how it might affect or inform planning. (see A Snapshot of Walden in 2021 in this chapter)

PLAN

The charrette method was utilized to directly engage the community in the design process and maximize their input. A charrette (/SHə'ret/) is an intense, collaborative planning and design session over a short period. It includes multiple opportunities for stakeholders to put forth their ideas as well as provide feedback on preliminary recommendations and concepts created by the team. (see Public Input on the following page)

REFINE

After the charrette, concepts were evaluated and refined based upon feedback received from stakeholders. This document was produced, which includes the final concepts, supporting graphics, and recommendations for the Town of Walden. After review by the Land Use Committee, the draft plan was presented to the public for final input.

IMPLEMENT

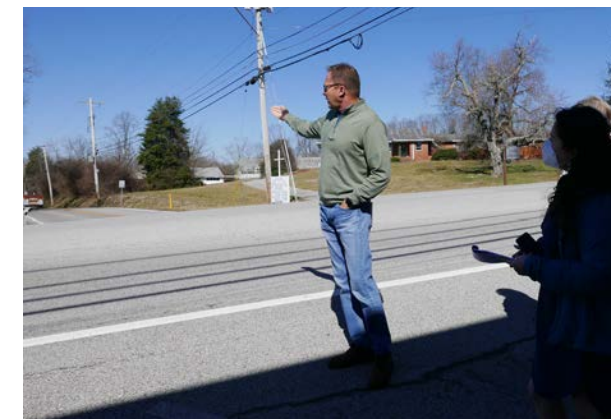
After the Draft Plan Presentation, final revisions were made based on input received to produce the final Plan that provides a clear, straightforward blueprint for the future of Walden.

PUBLIC INPUT RECAP

Public input is critical to the planning process. Outside experts bring their experience working in other places, and residents bring their experience living, working, and playing in their own community. Working together, stakeholders and consultants can envision what is possible and desirable within the context of the place. For this planning effort, there were four key community engagement opportunities for the consultant team to learn and gather input on ideas—each engagement opportunity built on the previous one to create a series of feedback loops. The goal was not to achieve unanimity but to achieve consensus on direction. An overview of each engagement event follows.

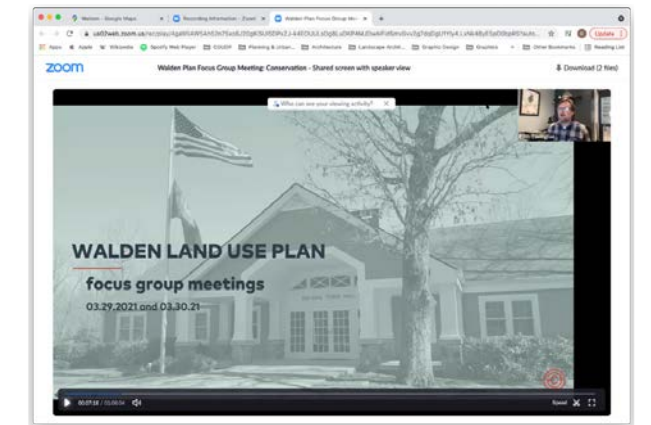
KICK-OFF

The project kicked off in early March when COVID protocols were still in place due to the pandemic. The protocols forced some rework to the schedule. The consultant team was able to travel to Walden, however, for a socially distanced tour of the community with Land Use Committee members and the new Mayor. All meetings, however, were held virtually, recorded, and uploaded to the Town's website on a page dedicated to the planning process. The turnout at the virtual Public Kick-off Meeting to introduce the project was held via Zoom from Town Hall. While the input received was useful, admittedly, turnout was light. The Land Use Committee decided that extra effort was necessary to maximize community input going forward.



FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

In late March, the consultant team held a series of virtual meetings with various focus groups. The meetings occurred over two days and including the following groups: non-profit organizations, government agencies, connectivity and mobility advocates, neighborhoods, conservation advocates, and Taft Highway focus area property owners.



During the Kick-off Trip, the Land Use Committee led the consultant team on a site tour. The tour was not limited to the Taft Highway focus area. It included the entire community with featured stops at Bachman Community Center, the Civic League, Topside, Mabbitt Springs (above), Falling Water Falls trailhead, The Little Brown Church, East Brow, McCoy Farm and Gardens, and the existing commercial areas along Taft (left). After the Kick-off Trip, pandemic protocols forced focus group meetings to be held virtually via Zoom (top).

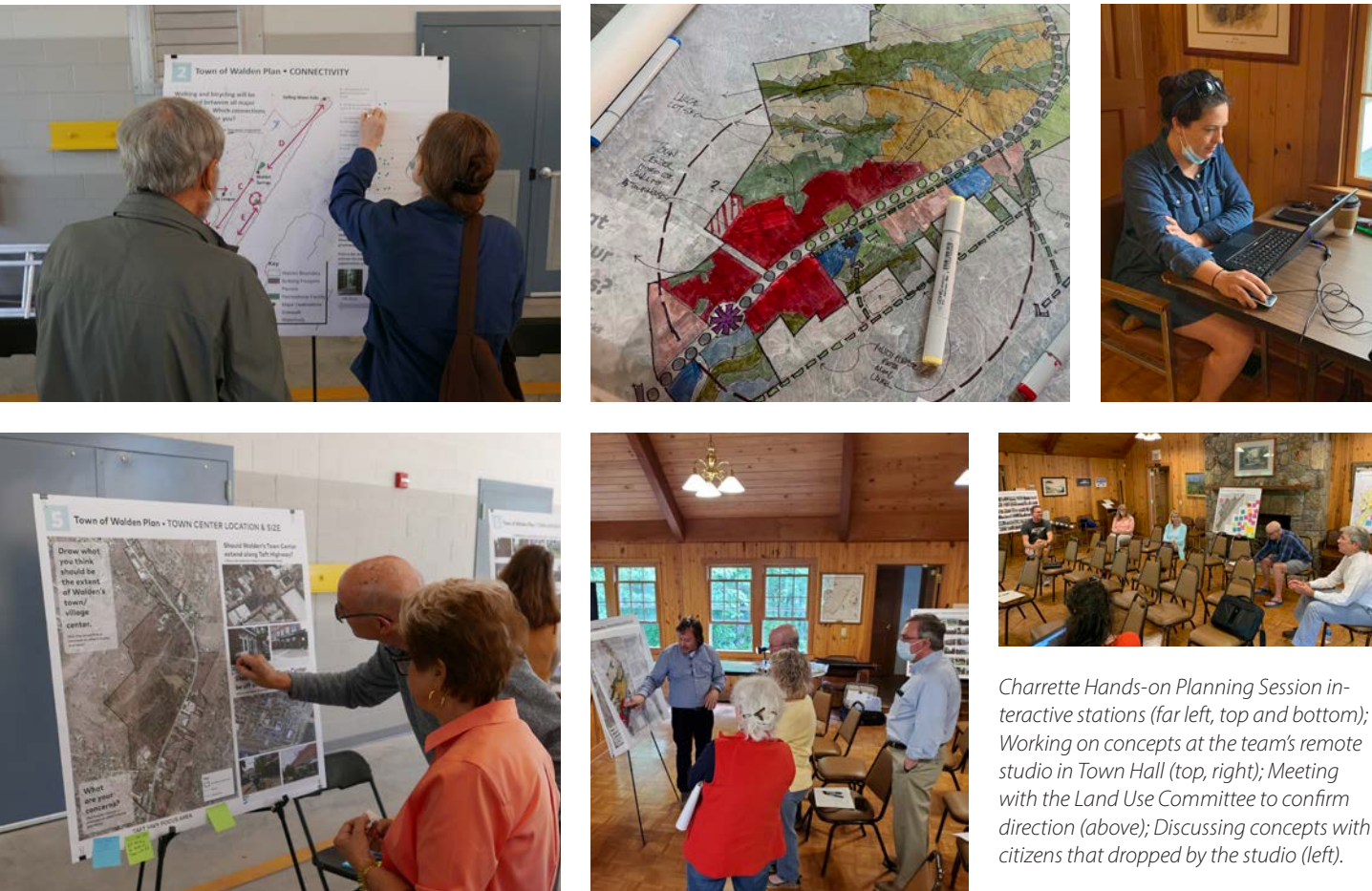
CHARRETTE

As mentioned previously, a charrette is an intense, multi-day brainstorming session that involves community engagement throughout. The Town used direct mailings, social media, email, and signs placed throughout the community to advertise the charrette to maximize input. The event occurred over four days in mid-May. It began on a Saturday morning at the Fire Hall with a Public Hands-on Planning Session involving more than 50 community members. This session involved a presentation on key findings from the consultant team and an interactive exercise with attendees. Walden was just beginning to emerge from pandemic protocol, so the exercises consisted of six individual stations where participants had the opportunity to weigh in on specific issues and provide their own ideas for the future of Walden. CHCRPA was generous to provide staff members to assist the consultant team.

For the remainder of the charrette, the consultant team set up a remote studio in Town Hall, reviewed the input from the Hands-on Session, and brainstormed initial concepts. At the end of the second day, the consultant team met with the Land Use Committee to present the initial concepts and confirm direction. The public was invited to drop into the remote studio, review the team’s work, and provide additional insight. On the last evening of the charrette, the consultant team hosted a Work-in-Progress Presentation at the Bachman Community Center. The team presented the results of the initial Hands-on Session and preliminary concepts for public input.

DRAFT PLAN PRESENTATION

After review of the Draft Plan document by the Land Use Committee, the Draft Plan was presented to the community for review and input.



Charrette Hands-on Planning Session interactive stations (far left, top and bottom); Working on concepts at the team’s remote studio in Town Hall (top, right); Meeting with the Land Use Committee to confirm direction (above); Discussing concepts with citizens that dropped by the studio (left).

WHAT WE HEARD AT THE CHARRETTE

Connectivity Priorities

- McCoy Farm to Pumpkin Patch via Laurel
- McCoy Farm to Signal Mountain/Cumberland Trail
- Pumpkin Patch to Mabbitt Springs
- McCoy Farm to Pruett’s

Town Center

- Mixed-use
- Pedestrian-friendly
- Low-rise
- Mix of housing types
- Sewer concerns

Taft Highway

- 2 lane section with median along frontage road and center turn lane elsewhere
- Protected pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Improved intersection with Anderson/W Road

Wayfinding priorities

- Trail signage
- Maintenance through signage, interpretation, and donation
- Wayfinding along streets for key assets

Sustainability priorities

- Incorporate alternative stormwater techniques

KEY THEMES

Based on the input from the Kick-off, Focus Group Meetings, and the Charrette the following key themes emerged:

Walden's Places

Land use and design policy to preserve the rural mountain character of Walden and guide the character of future development along Taft Highway in the heart of the community.

Walden's Treasures

A framework to protect and enhance Walden’s civic assets for generations to come.

Safely Connecting Walden For All

Transportation policy and prioritized project recommendations intended to make Walden a more connected and safe community for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Promoting a Sustainable and Resilient Walden

Environmental policy intended to guide future development and preserve Walden’s sensitive features.

The Heart of Walden

A design framework to guide the future development of a mixed-use, walkable center that will enhance Walden and create a true heart for the community.

The plan is organized according to these key themes, and the recommendations under each are intended to guide development decisions over the next twenty years.

2

WALDEN'S PLACES

[land use and character]

Traditionally, land use plans simply identified where the appropriate locations for particular land uses were within a community. Today, communities are as much, or more, interested in the form or character of development over land use. To understand this trend, consider a downtown and a commercial highway strip. Both would be identified as commercial on a land use map, but their character is very different. Incorporating development character into land use policy includes addressing elements such as the type, placement, and height of buildings. This allows a community the ability to be more specific about its vision for future development.

HOW TO USE LAND USE POLICY

It is important to note that land use policy is not zoning. Zoning is the set of regulations governing the development of property. Land use policy is intended to be used by the Town to guide decisions on development proposals, whether it is zoning change request or the review of a site plan. It is also the foundation for revisions to the Town's zoning and other regulations to implement the land use policy in the plan.

TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT

It is imperative for property owners and developers to understand that this plan sets forth a vision for future development or redevelopment within the Town, but it does not warrant that proposed development designed to meet this vision is guaranteed approval. The environmental impacts of development in the community must be considered with any proposal. In addition to meeting the standards established by Walden and Hamilton County, proposed development should clearly demonstrate that it has been designed to minimize its environmental impact and address infrastructure constraints. It is recommended that the Town add a requirement for applicants to attend a pre-application conference with Town officials to discuss their proposed development before submitting a formal request for approval from the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency or the Town. This will provide the Town and the applicant an opportunity to discuss the project, expectations, and the Town's vision. Finally, the Town may wish to engage a consultant to perform a market analysis for certain uses and a fiscal impact analysis to assess the impact of new development on the Town.

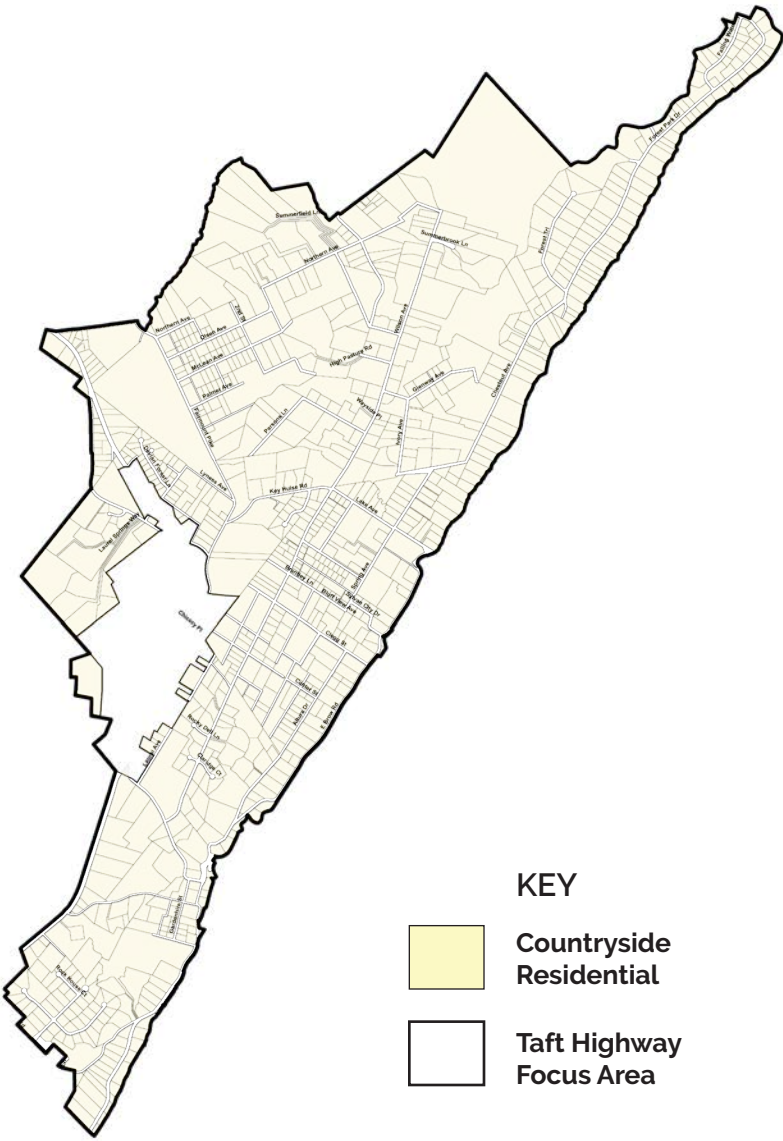
THE CHCRPA “PLACE TYPES” APPROACH

The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (CHCRPA) assists the Town of Walden to review development proposals because the Town does not have its own Planning Commission or planning staff. This plan intends to use the CHCRPA’s “Place Types” approach to land use policy as a basis for the land use policy in this plan. According to CHRPA, they have “created a palette of 20 Place Types to help people visualize the various forms that development can take and to help residents describe the future they envision for their community” (RPA Place Types List, 3/5/21). This approach aligns well with this plan as the Town of Walden has a similar desire to establish a clear vision for the future of Walden. It also ensures that this plan is as seamless as possible with CHRPA policy, which is intended to make the agency’s review assistance easier.

The CHCRPA’s Place Types guide (3/5/21) addresses a range of contexts from most urban to most rural. Each Place Type policy includes a description of the ideal condition; precedent imagery; guidance on the form and character of development; and a list of primary and secondary uses. The Place Types are considered a general palette of places, and the land use policy is intended to be customized for each community. That is the case with this plan. Key concepts for land use policy are mapped and described on the following pages beginning townwide and ending with the plan’s Taft Highway focus area.

KEY CONCEPTS • TOWNWIDE

This plan envisions a single Place Type policy for the area of Walden outside of the Taft Highway focus area, comprising approximately 2,000 acres in the Town. This policy is based on the community’s heritage, current conditions, and community desire and has been customized to reflect these.



TOWNWIDE LAND USE POLICY MAP

COUNTRYSIDE RESIDENTIAL

Countryside Residential is the CHRPA’s most rural single-family detached residential land use policy. These areas are characterized by single-family homes on large lots creating large blocks.

Key Characteristics:

SITE AND BUILDING CHARACTER

- Single-family houses on large lots with a minimum of two acres
- Front setbacks are typically deep
- Buildings are typically no more than 2.5 stories
- Sites consist of natural vegetation or natural landscaping

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

- Streets are generally narrow with swale-type drainage and designed to work with the topographic features of Walden’s Ridge
- Sidewalks are not typical with the possible exception of routes between key destinations
- Pedestrian and bicycle accommodation is more often through walking trails and bicycle routes
- Individual lots are primarily accessed from the front, and parking is located in the front, side, or rear of the lot

PRIMARY LAND USES

Single-family detached residential, accessory buildings, non-commercial farming activities

SECONDARY LAND USES

Civic/institutional facilities

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

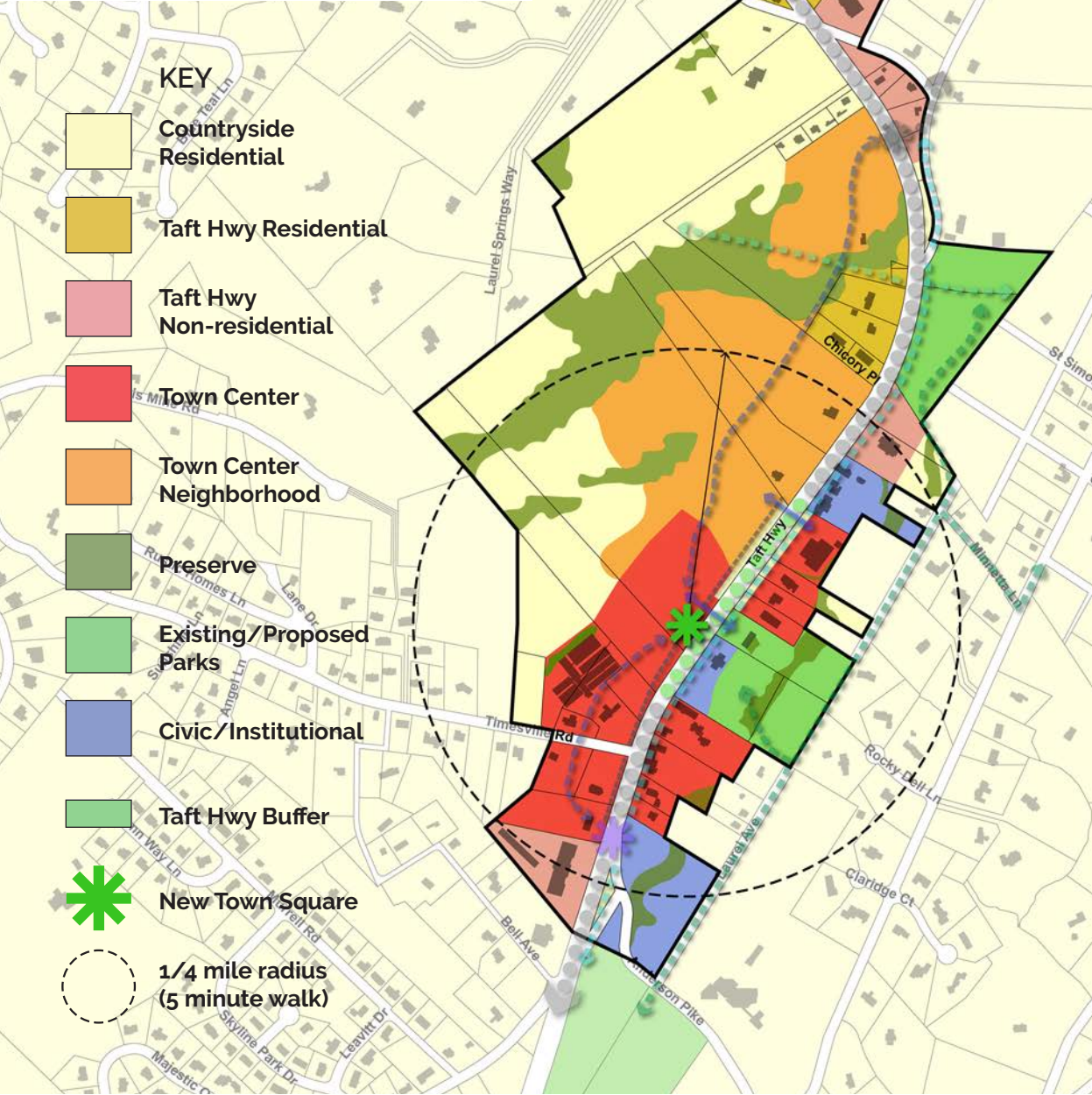
A-1, R-1



Precedent imagery for Taft Highway Residential

KEY CONCEPTS • TAFT HIGHWAY FOCUS AREA

The Taft Highway Focus Area is approximately 177 acres and much more varied in its envisioned use and character. This reflects the nature of Taft Highway as a busy state highway, current conditions, and community input. This plan envisions six Place Type policies customized for the focus area.



TAFT HIGHWAY FOCUS AREA LAND USE POLICY MAP



TAFT HIGHWAY RESIDENTIAL

Taft Highway Residential is a land use policy intended to allow existing residential lots in the focus area to redevelop in the future with single-family or two-family uses on lots less than two acres. It also recognizes that some of these existing older lots are less than the current two-acre minimum lot size required by the zoning ordinance. These parcels are mostly in the northern portion of the focus area and directly fronting on Taft Highway. The policy is akin to CHRPA's Suburban Residential Place Type, a "predominantly low intensity, single-family detached residential pattern" that encourages a limited mix of housing types.

Key Characteristics:

SITE AND BUILDING CHARACTER

- Single-family detached or two-family attached houses on existing lots
- Depending on infrastructure, several, small detached houses grouped around a landscaped courtyard may be on a single lot
- Front setbacks are generally consistent with adjacent residential lots along Taft Highway
- Buildings are typically between 1 and 2.5 stories
- Two-family attached houses are designed to look like a single-family residence
- Sites consist of natural vegetation or landscaping

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

- The majority of these lots are accessed from Taft Highway
- Sidewalks or a shared-use path are included along the frontage to create a consistent pedestrian/bicycle network

PRIMARY LAND USES

Single-family detached residential, two-family attached residential (duplexes), accessory buildings

SECONDARY LAND USES

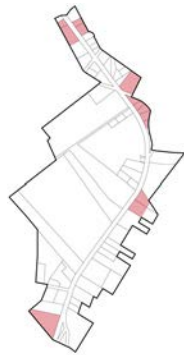
Civic/institutional facilities

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

The special permit for "Townhouses in R-1" along Taft Highway in the zoning ordinance would need to be revised or a new zoning district with appropriate design standards created.



Precedent imagery for Taft Highway Residential policy



TAFT HIGHWAY NON-RESIDENTIAL

The Taft Highway Non-residential policy is applied to existing non-residential development along Taft north of Fairmount Pike in the focus area. This policy recognizes that these properties, which are already zoned for non-residential, will likely remain non-residential. However, it is important that if these properties redevelop in the future, the character of the development is improved. The current character of these properties is more suburban in character with buildings set back from Taft and parking between the building and the highway. The policy most closely aligns with CHCRPA's Suburban Corridor policy; however, this suggestion confused some people at the charrette. When "suburban corridor" was mentioned, they associated the term more with Brainerd Road than Taft Highway. The policy has been renamed and modified in this plan to be more reflective of Walden with guidance for redevelopment.

Key Characteristics:

SITE AND BUILDING CHARACTER

- Buildings are generally set back from the highway, but a standard setback ensures that new development has a more consistent presence along the highway
- Buildings have a small to medium footprint (up to +/-5,000 sf) or designed to resemble buildings with a small footprint
- Buildings are typically 1 story, not to exceed 2 stories
- Parking is typically located between the building and the highway and is limited to one double-loaded bay of parking with additional parking to the side or rear of the building
- Parking lots that front the highway or other roads have perimeter landscaping to screen the parking lot from the highway

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

- The majority of these lots are accessed from Taft Highway
- Sidewalks or a shared-use path along the frontage creates a consistent pedestrian/bicycle network
- Adjacent properties have cross access easements, which allow cars to move between properties without re-entering Taft Highway

PRIMARY LAND USES

Commercial (retail, restaurants, entertainment, personal services, offices, etc.)

SECONDARY LAND USES

Civic/institutional

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

C-1



Precedent imagery for Taft Highway Non-residential policy



COUNTRYSIDE RESIDENTIAL

This plan applies the Countryside Residential Place Type to an extensive portion of the focus area to create an appropriate transition to large single-family lots northwest of the Town Center and Town Center Neighborhood Place Types. This policy also acknowledges the topographic constraints in this area as well as Middle Creek in an attempt to be sensitive to these environmental features. See the description of Countryside Residential earlier in this chapter for additional information.



PRESERVE

During the charrette, the consultant team completed a cursory slope analysis of the focus area based on available topographic data. The purpose of this task was to identify areas with moderate (15%-25%) slopes and extreme slopes (25%+). This plan envisions those areas with extreme slopes be preserved with the possible exception of creating a key road or trail connection.

Key Characteristics:

SITE AND BUILDING CHARACTER

Structures should be limited to those associated with trails and designed to minimize disturbance to sensitive environmental features

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

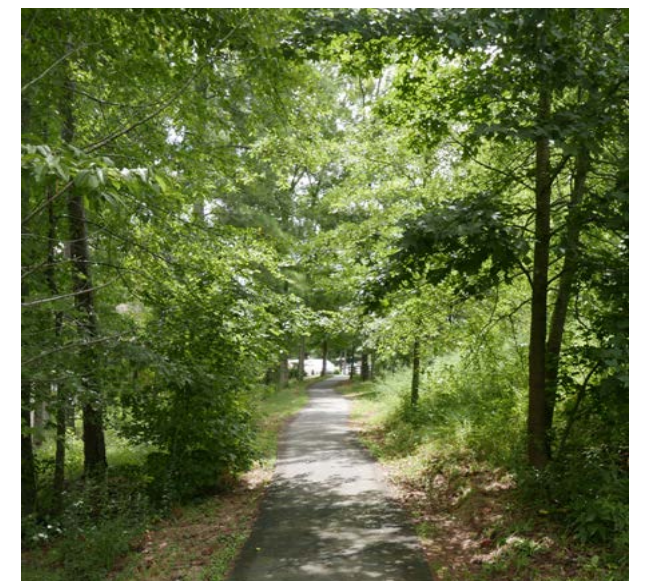
Roads, bicycle paths, pedestrian paths are designed to minimize disturbance to sensitive environmental features

PRIMARY LAND USES

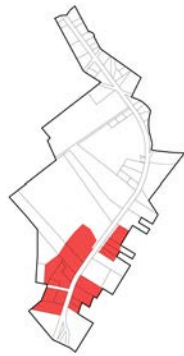
Undisturbed open space, passive recreation space, trails

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

Any



Precedent imagery for Preserve policy



TOWN CENTER

This plan recognizes the desire by the Town of Walden to create a true center and heart for the community. The Town Center Place Type is applied to both sides of Taft Highway, generally centered around Town Hall and the Pumpkin Patch. The Town Center Place Type most closely aligns with CHCRPA's Village Center Place Type, which envisions a compact, pedestrian-friendly center with a mix of uses and a smaller scale than typical town centers with bigger, taller buildings. Concerning existing development in the area, this plan recognizes that it will most likely remain; however, there is an opportunity to create a more cohesive character if those properties redevelop in the future. Chapter 6 of this plan provides more detail on the concept of creating a Town Center, but the following is a general description of the policy.

Key Characteristics:

SITE AND BUILDING CHARACTER

- New development is master planned in a manner that creates a network of streets and blocks connected together
- Front setbacks are shallow or non-existent, and off-street parking is located behind or below buildings
- Buildings are generally 1 to 2.5 stories, though in some instances, buildings may be 3 stories to terminate an important street vista or accommodate topographic features
- Town centers feature a mixture of uses both horizontally (along a street) or vertically (in the same building)
- Buildings, which are often right next to each other, have a small to medium footprint or are otherwise designed to minimize their mass and bulk visually
- Buildings are designed to respond to the natural topography to minimize significant mass grading
- Buildings generally have shopfronts at street level to improve the vitality of the street
- Wide sidewalks and small courtyards accommodate outdoor dining
- Town centers often have a central square or green that functions as a central gathering space for the community
- Utilities are located underground

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

- The natural features of the site shape new streets and blocks
- New streets are designed to naturally calm

traffic through narrow travel lanes, on-street parking, and street trees

- Sidewalks are generally wider than in more residential areas
- Bicycles are accommodated through shared travel lanes and, in the case of key connectors, bicycle lanes.
- Parking is generally accessed from an alley or rear lane

PRIMARY LAND USES

Commercial (retail, restaurants, entertainment, personal services, offices, etc.), single-family attached residential (townhouses), multi-family residential on upper levels (flats)

SECONDARY LAND USES

Civic/institutional

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

A revised and updated VC-1 or a new district with appropriate design standards.



Precedent imagery for Town Center policy (see Ch. 6 for more)



TOWN CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD

Walden has the opportunity to address the needs of housing choice within its Town Center without diminishing the quiet, rural character of most of the community. This plan applies the Town Center Neighborhood Place type to a portion of the focus area west of Taft Highway and generally east of Middle Creek. The Town Center Neighborhood Place Type most closely aligns with CHCRPA's Urban Residential Place Type, which features a range of housing types in a compact, pedestrian-friendly pattern. Chapter 6 of this plan provides more detail on the concept of providing a range of housing types in a Town Center, but a general description of the policy is presented here.

Key Characteristics:

SITE AND BUILDING CHARACTER

- New development is master planned in a manner that creates a network of streets and blocks connected together.
- There is a mixture of residential building types, from single-family detached residential to small multi-family (up to 6 units per lot)
- Front setbacks are shallow, and off-street parking is located behind, beside, or below buildings
- Buildings are designed to engage the street with stoops and porches.
- Buildings are generally 1 to 2.5 stories, though in some instances, buildings may be 3 stories to accommodate topographic features
- Buildings are designed to respond to the natural topography to minimize significant mass grading
- Neighborhoods include small parks, trails, and other public spaces for use by residents
- Utilities are located underground

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

- The natural features of the site shape new streets and blocks
- New streets are designed to naturally calm traffic through narrow travel lanes, on-street parking, and street trees
- Sidewalks are prevalent on both sides of the street
- Bicycles are accommodated through shared travel lanes and, in the case of key connectors, bicycle lanes.

tors, bicycle lanes.

- Parking is generally accessed from an alley or rear lane, though access from the street may be necessary where topographic constraints exist

PRIMARY LAND USES

Single-family detached residential, single-family attached residential (townhouses), multi-family residential in buildings designed to resemble a large single-family house (mansion flats-4 to 6 units per building max.)

SECONDARY LAND USES

Civic/institutional

APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS

A new zoning district with appropriate bulk and design standards would need to be created to implement this policy.



Precedent imagery for Town Center Neighborhood policy (see Ch. 6 for more)



CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL AND PARKS

Some key civic and institutional sites have been identified on the Framework Plan for the focus area. This is not a specific Place Type but rather an acknowledgment of these key sites and the intent to preserve and enhance them. Sites include the Pinecrest Baptist Church, the WRES Fire Hall, Walden Town Hall, and a portion of the St. Augustine Catholic Church property. This plan does recommend converting town-owned land near the intersection of Taft and Fairmount Pike into passive park space and trails with the possibility of expansion through the acquisition of the vacant parcel directly south owned by Walden's Ridge Emergency Services.



Images of some of Walden's civic and institutional facilities and parks in the Taft Highway Focus Area

RECOMMENDATIONS

(0, 5, 20-YEAR TIMEFRAME)

DO THIS NOW

- 2.1 Adopt the Town of Walden Plan as the Town's official land use policy and use it to guide municipal decisions on development proposals.
- 2.2 Update the zoning ordinance and other development regulations to align with the land use policy recommendations for the Town Center Place Types in the Taft Highway Focus Area (see chapters 5 and 6 for more detail on specific zoning recommendations).
- 2.3 Add a pre-application meeting requirement between a developer and Town officials.

DO THIS WITHIN 5 YEARS

- 2.4 Consider conducting a housing and retail market analysis to forecast the market potential for various residential and retail uses.
- 2.5 Consider conducting a fiscal impact and benefit analysis of the policies in this plan.
- 2.6 Create a new zoning district with site and building design standards to implement the Taft Highway Residential Place Type.
- 2.7 Update the site and building design standards for the C-1 zoning district to align with the Taft Highway Non-residential Place Type.

DO THIS WITHIN 20 YEARS

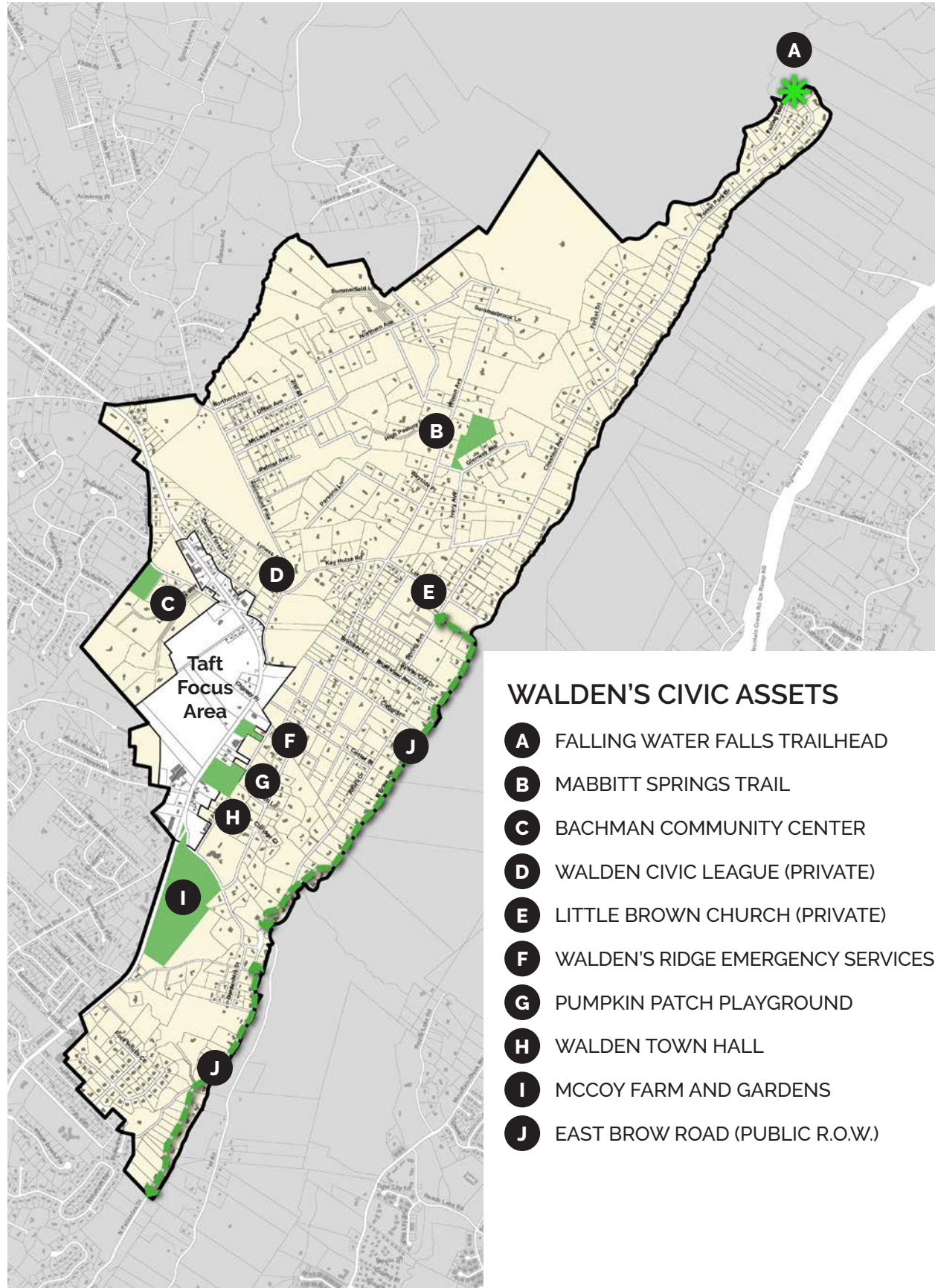
- 2.8 Review the land use policy in the Town of Walden Plan every five years and adjust it as needed to reflect changes in community preference, market conditions, infrastructure, or other factors that could affect the quality of life.

3

WALDEN'S TREASURES

[civic assets]

Walden has many treasures among its places and people, but this section is focused on some of its civic assets. Civic spaces and facilities are a crucial ingredient in a community's quality of life. Walden is blessed with several important spaces both within and just outside the community. The Pumpkin Patch, McCoy Farm and Gardens, Bachman Community Center, and the Civic League combine recreational space with facilities serving several purposes. Falling Water Falls, Mabbitt Springs Trail, and the Eastern Brow are more recreational in nature. These spaces serve an important function as places of gathering and active and passive recreation; however, they can also be a liability. Popularity invites people from outside the community to enjoy these places with less regard for the residents of Walden. It is a double-edged sword. Visitors can be great for a community's economy, but if the quality of these places wanes, it becomes detrimental to the community and, more importantly, its citizens.



CURRENT CHALLENGES

The Town has supported sites such as McCoy, Bachman, and the Pumpkin Patch and should continue to do so. However, there are some challenges with other sites where the Town has identified the need for attention. The current, most important challenges for the Town's civic assets seem to come from transient visitors to its recreational amenities. Falling Water Falls is a state natural recreational area, but access is from the Forest Park neighborhood in Walden. Visitors must travel to this location by car, and directions on the state's website direct visitors through Walden's residential streets, including Key Hulse, Lake, Ivory, Chestnut, and finally Forest Park Drive. This creates two key challenges: vehicular and pedestrian conflicts since there are no sidewalks and issues with parking. The Mabbitt Springs Trail is owned by the Town and intended to be for residents, but its popularity has also created parking, traffic, and speeding issues. Other challenges include the lack of wayfinding signage, wandering off trails leading to erosion concerns, and trespassing on private property. Chapter 3 addresses connectivity and mobility issues, but concepts to address these other challenges are included here.



THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING WALDEN'S ASSETS

It is inherent that managing Walden's assets sustains them for future generations of its citizens. There may be some trepidation about encouraging more visitors from outside the community, however. While these treasures are part of Walden, there is great benefit in sharing them with others. Heritage and recreational tourism is a key economic generator in many communities. If the community realizes its vision of a Town Center, visitors may stay a little longer to eat in Walden's restaurants and visit its shops. This can help offset the lost revenue from ending the Hall Income Tax.



Issues at Mabbitt Springs include on street parking along Glenway (left) and lack of formal, off-street parking (above). Similar issues with Falling Water Falls have plagued the Forest Park neighborhood for years (top). It is important to address three factors at these sites: parking, trailheads, and trail signage.

KEY CONCEPTS

PARKING

The Pumpkin Patch

A new parking area is envisioned on the east side of the Pumpkin Patch Playground accessed from Laurel Avenue. This parking area will serve the playground and serve the future Laurel Avenue shared use path envisioned to connect McCoy Farm and Gardens with the Pumpkin Patch and eventually continue north toward Walden’s other facilities.

Mabbitt Springs Trail

Currently, parking for the Mabbitt Springs trail consists of a small gravel area off Glenway Avenue. This small gravel area should be made more formal with clear markings or a low wood barrier defining the limits of the parking area.



Other barriers and signage could be useful to deter on-street parking. Direct access to the trail from the parking area should be better defined.

Falling Water Falls Trail

Parking for the popular trail is a triangular-shaped paved area just off the curve of where Forest Park Drive turns into Falling Water Trail (a road). The area has no space markings and is simply insufficient for the volume of visitors, which leads to illegal on-street parking. There are two potential solutions the Town should consider. One would be to add clearly defined on-street diagonal parking along the frontage of the state property. Another solution, perhaps the most ideal, would be to work with the state to create off-street parking at the property entrance just east of the trail, where the land is fairly level.



Trail parking areas should be designed to compliment the natural character of their surroundings. Features such as wood rail fences, pervious paving, timber bollards delineating no parking zones, and natural landscaping can formalize parking areas without detracting from the surrounding character.

ON-GOING MANAGEMENT

Trail Signage for key issues (private property, stay on trail, erosion, education, etc.) In general, the trails in Walden are not signed very well, which has led to several issues. To combat this, the Town should budget to add signage along portions of the trails where issues currently occur. This would include signage that:

- Identifies private property to minimize trespassing;
- Instructs hikers to stay on the trail to minimize erosion problems; and
- Educates hikers on the history of Walden and the importance of maintaining trails.

The Town should consider installing donation meters at Pumpkin Patch Playground, Mabbitt Springs, Falling Water Falls (in coordination with the state), and potentially a few locations along the East Brow. These meters are typical-



ly repurposed parking meters and may be an effective tool to secure donations from visitors outside of the community.

The Town may also consider pursuing a relationship with an entity willing to “adopt” some of these facilities and maintain them.

TRAILHEAD SIGNAGE

Coordinated trailhead signage is important in creating a cohesive look and feel to the community. The two priority locations would be Mabbitt Springs and Falling Water Falls. The trailhead at Mabbitt Springs could be designed in conjunction with an improved parking area and replacement of the worn bridge over Little Falling Water Creek. The trailhead at Falling Water Falls could also be incorporated into parking improvements. All trailhead signage can be included as part of a Way-finding Master Plan.

Maintenance concepts include trail signage to prevent wandering and trespassing (left, top and bottom), educational signage (bottom, left), and trail donation meters to raise maintenance funds (far left). Trailhead signage should be right-sized for the facility and the design coordinated to create a cohesive look and convey the appropriate information.





POTENTIAL WAYFINDING SIGN LOCATIONS



Wayfinding signage can have a traditional or more modern look. It is important to develop a wayfinding master plan with public input to develop a cohesive palette of signage for the community.

WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE

Wayfinding signage is important to direct visitors to key places in the community. It also helps to direct these visitors along a particular path the Town intends for them to take. Strategically placed wayfinding signage also helps to tie a community together with a consistent character. The Town should complete a Way-finding Master Plan for the entire community, including concepts for the size and design of the signage and a phasing strategy. The Parks Committee could serve as the Steering Committee for the plan, since they are already working on identifying signage priorities. The plan should include robust public input. As a starting point, some ideal locations for wayfinding signage have been identified in the Framework Plan.

PROMOTION

Once there has been progress on improvements to Walden's civic assets and their management, it is recommended that the Town "get the word out" about these great assets to the greater community. In addition to the potential economic spin-off, this promotion provides the opportunity to let visitors know when and how to visit these places and what to do when they are there. The following are ways to promote:

- Printed materials for local businesses and regional visitor's centers;
- A dedicated page on the Town's website;
- Working with Google, trail apps, and similar services to highlight locations and ensure that routes and driving directions are consistent with the Town's plan; and
- Working with Signal Mountain and Hamilton County on cross-promotion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(0, 5, 20-YEAR TIMEFRAME)

DO THIS NOW

- 3.1 Complete a Wayfinding and Trailhead Signage Master Plan for the entire Town
- 3.2 Appoint the Parks Committee to serve as the steering committee for the Wayfinding and Trailhead Signage Master Plan
- 3.3 Consult with mapping companies (Google, Waze, Bing, Apple, etc.) and other app developers to revise routings as needed
- 3.4 Add a dedicated page on the Town's website with information on key civic sites and links to their websites as possible
- 3.5 Install "Private Property" trail signage in all locations where trails cross private property
- 3.6 Identify problem areas along trails where visitors tend to leave the trail and install "Stay on Trail" signage
- 3.7 Identify erosion issues along trails and install educational signage to discourage further damage
- 3.8 Improve the parking area at Mabbitt Springs
- 3.9 Construct a new trailhead at Mabbitt Springs and replace the pedestrian bridge
- 3.10 Work with the state to improve the parking area at Falling Water Falls
- 3.11 Work with the state to construct a new trailhead at Falling Water Falls
- 3.12 Construct parking area for the Pumpkin Patch near the terminus of Laurel Avenue

DO THIS WITHIN 5 YEARS

- 3.13 Begin early-phase implementation of the Wayfinding and Trail Signage Master Plan
- 3.14 Install trail maintenance donation meters at trailheads and other key sites

DO THIS WITHIN 20 YEARS

- 3.15 Complete implementation of the Wayfinding and Trail Signage Master Plan



4 SAFELY CONNECTING WALDEN FOR ALL

[mobility]

Whether to live or visit, people are drawn to Walden's Ridge, given its scenic and natural beauty, as well as the availability of recreational trails, open space, and parks. The Ridge has long been a draw for Chattanooga residents and beyond since the days of Walden's historic Summertown community and continues to be, with the community's trail destinations exploding in popularity in recent years.

Active living is and has been strongly valued by Walden residents. During the 1998 planning process for the Town Center Plan, residents identified walkability and bikeability as an important community issue that needed to be addressed, with sidewalks and trail infrastructure identified as the number one service or activity that was most needed in Walden at the time. Safe streets, in general, were a common theme throughout the Plan and its recommendations.

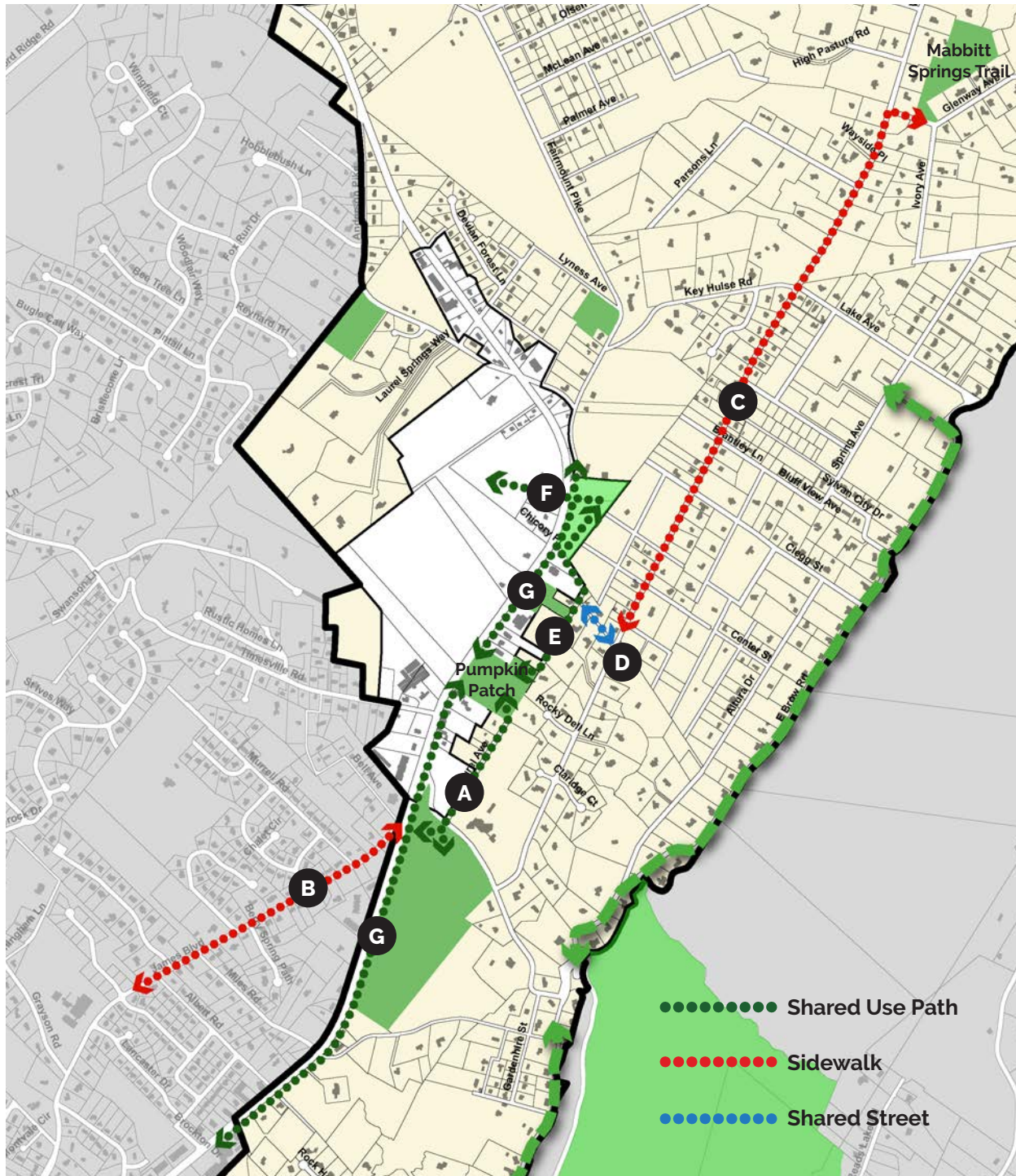
The 2019 Walden land use planning survey, greenways, walking trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes ranked as highly desirable for the community. During the 2020 mayoral election, walkability and bikeability in Walden again rose to the top as topic of community interest. Ensuring safe and comfortable walking and bicycling connections to Walden's resources and assets, and safe streets, in general, is viewed as a criti-

cal component to supporting Walden's mission for a high quality of life.

SAFETY AND MOBILITY ISSUES

Residential development to the north of Walden in the county has led to shifts in travel patterns, specifically during commuting hours. Queues at certain intersections are experiencing increases in delay as gaps in cross-traffic decrease. Additionally, increased traffic on residential shared streets, also due in part to the rise in popularity of hiking trails, has diminished the comfortability and safety for those walking and bicycling, specifically during peak hours.

Currently, the only dedicated infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists are the sidewalks in the Brow Estates Subdivision. The remaining roadways act as shared streets where people walking and bicycling share space with vehicles, especially given the general lack of shoulders and narrow roads. The low-density development pattern and challenges of mountain-top construction (e.g., narrow rights-of-way, topography, and stormwater management) create barriers to providing pedestrian and bicycle networks; therefore, critical connections should be prioritized for construction with other low-cost methods applied to key shared streets.



CONNECTIVITY PRIORITIES

- A** MCCOY TO PUMPKIN PATCH
- B** MCCOY TO SIGNAL MT.
- C** PUMPKIN PATCH TO MABBITT (WILSON)
- D** PUMPKIN PATCH TO MABBITT (MINETTA)
- E** PUMPKIN PATCH TO MABBITT (MINETTA)
- F** UTILITY EASEMENT CONNECTION
- G** WALDEN TO SIGNAL MT. (SEE CH. 6)

KEY CONCEPTS

CONNECTIVITY PRIORITIES

Recognizing the challenges of expanding the pedestrian and bicycle networks, priority connections the Town should pursue in the near term were identified by residents. The increasingly popular McCoy Farm and Gardens and the Pumpkin Patch are important community hubs, which residents desire to connect as their number one priority connection. This connection, utilizing Laurel Avenue, was also identified as an important element in the 1998 Town Center Plan.

Although in Signal Mountain's jurisdiction, completing the existing gaps in the sidewalk network on James Boulevard near Taft Highway was second most important. Bridging these short gaps would allow residents and visitors of both communities to seamlessly travel between McCoy and Signal Point Reservation, all on a sidewalk. This four-mile connection would provide access to several destinations within Signal Mountain, including the library, playhouse, country club, Althaus Park, and the regional Cumberland Trail, while providing Signal Mountain residents access to McCoy and, eventually, the Pumpkin Patch.

The third most important identified connection was the Pumpkin Patch to Mabbitt Springs, a scenic 2-mile soft-surface trail that connects Glenway Avenue to Falling Water Falls State Natural Area. Extending the proposed Laurel Avenue shared use path east within the existing right-of-way to eventually connect to Wilson Avenue provides the most direct connection between these destinations. The Laurel Avenue extension would also give back access to the Bread Basket, new Fire Hall, and Ace's Hardware, a connection that was also identified in the 1998 Town Center Plan.

Other connectivity opportunities include a shared-use path along Taft Highway connecting the Pumpkin Patch to Signal Mountain's municipal limits near Elberfeld Road. The Town has pursued grant funding twice (unsuccess-

fully) in recent years to implement this path. In addition, the Town is uniquely positioned with an extensive network of utility easements and right-of-way, seemingly originally intended for roadway construction, for potential trail development. Off-road soft-surface or paved trails could connect low-volume residential streets, provide low-stress alternatives to higher speed or heavily traveled corridors, or provide more direct connections between destinations that could not be accomplished due to the orientation of the existing roadway network. These connections are only possible if Walden does, in fact, own the right-of-way, and the community and impacted property owners are supportive.

Finally, there is a desire to explore connectivity between Walden and the new Walden's Ridge Park south of E. Brow Road along the W Road. While acknowledging the extreme topography and right-of-way challenges, a connection into the park could provide Walden and Signal Mountain residents direct access to the 10-mile mountain bike trail system and rock-climbing opportunities without having to drive to the proposed parking area midway down the W Road.



Examples of some of the locations identified as priorities for improved crossing, clockwise from top, left: Crosswalk across Taft Highway near Hampton Road, Laurel Avenue across Anderson Pike to McCoy Farm and Gardens, East Brow Road and the W Road, and James Boulevard at Taft Highway.

CROSSING PRIORITIES

Providing safe opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross roadways is a critical component of a well-connected community. These crossings should be well-marked with reflective thermoplastic striping and enhanced with snow-plowable pavement reflectors and appropriate pavement markings and signage in advance of the crossings. Depending upon expected pedestrian and bicyclist volumes, appropriate pedestrian signalization should be provided.

The crossing at Anderson Pike and Laurel Avenue should be well-signed and marked, given the need for this crossing to accommodate users of all ages and abilities traveling between McCoy and the Pumpkin Patch. A pedestrian-actuated rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) should be constructed with the implementation of the Laurel Avenue connection. Traverse rumble strips in advance of the crosswalk on either approach could further improve crosswalk visibility.

Providing a safe and comfortable crossing across Taft Highway between McCoy and James Boulevard would be critical once sidewalk gaps are filled. The ultimate location of the crossing depends upon the proposed roundabout's potential location. If located closer to James Boulevard, users would be encouraged to cross at the roundabout; however, if located closer to Timesville Road, an overhead pedestrian signal

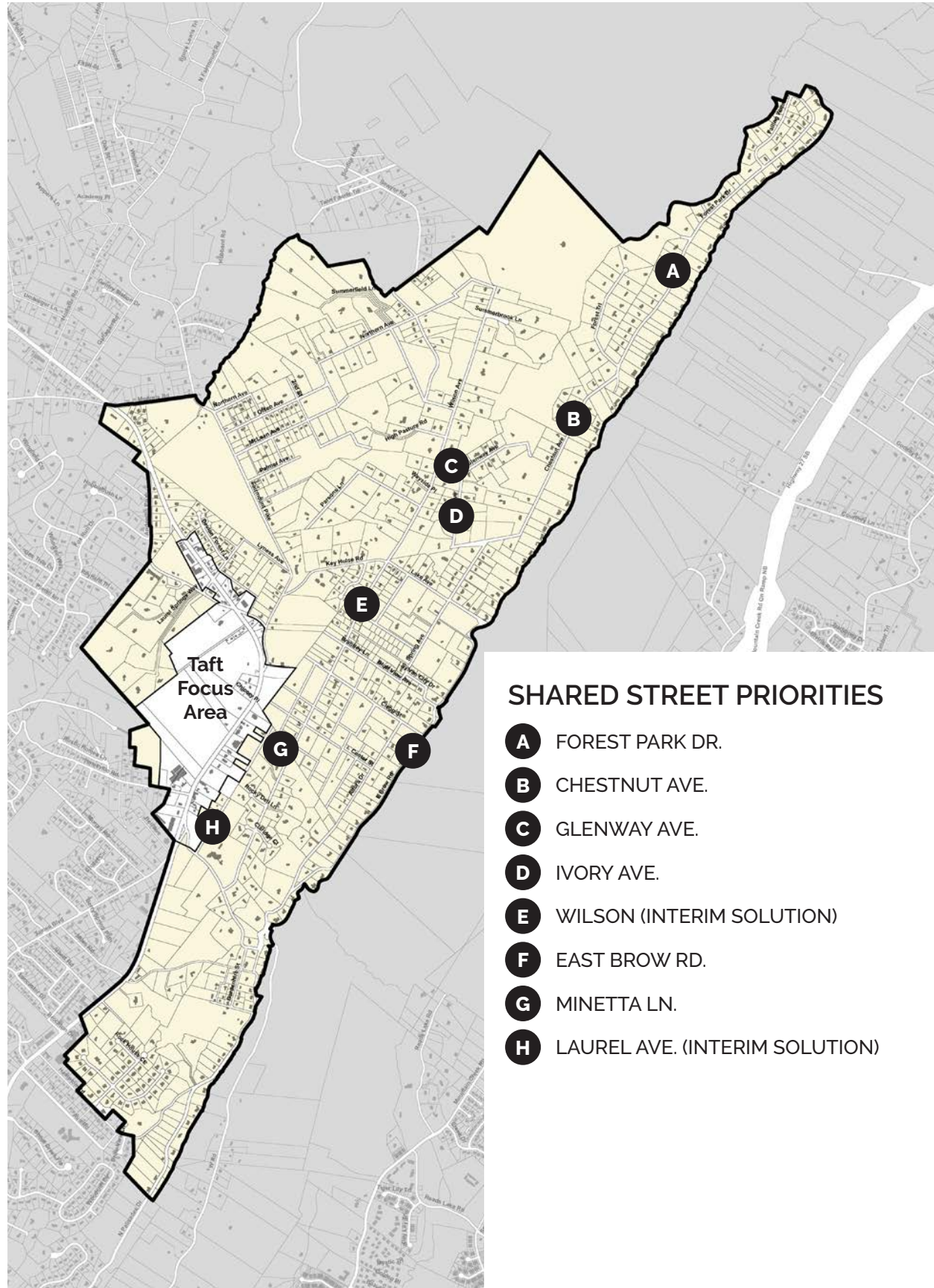
would be evaluated for a more direct connection between McCoy and James Boulevard. A pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB), overhead flasher, or full traffic signal should be considered at this location.

While largely on private property, the existing connection between the shared Wayside Presbyterian Church parking lot and the Signal Mountain Christian School should be improved to be ADA-compliant (i.e., personal mobility device and stroller accessible). This should include a marked crosswalk with ADA-accessible curb ramps and appropriate approach signage at Key-Hulse Road.

Additional priority opportunities include crossing Taft Highway near Hampton Road. The Plateau's only marked crosswalk across Taft Highway is located 400' to the east of Hampton Road, which is located away from the cluster of commercial destinations. Given the number of destinations, including the Plateau's premier shopping and gathering space, Pruett's Market, additional crossing opportunities should be considered. A final important crossing worth further evaluation is the intersection of E. Brow Road, Anderson Pike, and the W Rd. Topography and roadway alignments create challenges for all roadway users at this intersection; however, it can be especially challenging for the pedestrians and bicyclists that use the popular E. Brow Road.

Example of a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) for pedestrian crossings where there is no cross street or traffic signal.





SHARED STREET PRIORITIES

Shared streets are an important component of Walden's mobility network, given the challenges of extending pedestrian and bicycle networks. Traffic calming is a tool Walden should explore for supporting safer streets, which uses a three-pronged approach, known as the Three E's of traffic safety. These include enforcement, engineering, and education. Multi-disciplinary strategies under these categories must be coordinated and integrated to truly approach the complex issue of speed reduction.

Enforcement of roadway laws, namely adhering to posted speed limits, encourages safer roadway behaviors. Walden should explore contract-

ing with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office to provide random speed enforcement in Walden's neighborhoods and along major thoroughfares.

Engineering applications can help to reduce dangerous driving behaviors or alert motorists of the likely presence of people walking or bicycling. For example, speed cushions are a tool that can help support "self-enforcing" roadways by ensuring vehicles travel at an appropriate speed, especially on roadways such as the Brow Road, where pedestrian and bicyclist activity is heavy, and sight distance can be challenging. Other engineering applications include changes to or the addition of pavement striping and markings, signage, and speed-feedback radar signs.



Examples of engineering applications that can curb dangerous driving behavior include rumble strips at pedestrian crossings (above, left), gentle-rise asphalt speed humps (above), and speed cushions (left). These traffic calming applications have evolved over the years to address issues such as emergency access and forcing near stops at each instance.

Two potential changes to the existing cross-sections of shared streets, specifically, present opportunities to improve safety through low-cost applications. These include exploring removing the double solid yellow centerline on residential streets, such as Altura Drive or Spring Avenue, and, instead, adding reflective white edgelines. These edgelines, in combination with snow-plowable pavement reflectors and dashed reflective white centerlines (similar to Signal Mountain's Cauthen Way), would help to differentiate residential streets from those intended to carry heavier traffic volumes; signifying when vehicles enter Walden's "neighborhoods." The reflective striping and pavement reflectors would assist motorists in navigating the roadway during fog or other low visibility events.

An alternative low-cost roadway striping configuration worth evaluating is advisory lanes. This relatively new application in the United States allows pedestrians and bicyclists to use the shoulder space delineated by white dashed lines with vehicular

traffic entering the shoulder space to safely pass on-coming vehicles (while yielding to those already using the shoulder). Advisory lanes are only appropriate on certain low-volume, low-speed streets and require further evaluation as well as coordination with impacted residents. Additionally, frequent fog on Walden's Ridge may impact the safe use of this configuration. If implemented, it should be used temporarily until permanent infrastructure can be constructed or as an option to expand the safety of Walden's



Low-cost alternatives to improve safety on local streets include removing center striping and replacing with reflective edge lines (left) and traffic calming techniques, such as chokers, designed to reduce the speed of vehicles.

very low volume/local traffic residential streets, such as Glenway Avenue. Speed cushions might be used in tandem to ensure safe vehicle speeds in locations with poor sight distance.

Finally, education is a component that includes public awareness of the importance of roadway safety as well as educating roadway users. Strategies include yard signs, neighborhood traffic safety campaigns, awareness posters in parks and at businesses, and traffic safety programs at schools. Ultimately, safe behaviors are an individual choice, and improving people's awareness, and attitudes towards shared streets are an important component to increasing roadway safety.

Signage and bumper stickers can be an integral part of a neighborhood traffic safety campaign.



RECOMMENDATIONS
(0, 5, 20-YEAR TIMEFRAME)

DO THIS NOW

- 4.1 Explore contracting with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office for strategic speed enforcement.
- 4.2 Consider passing a three-foot ordinance for both pedestrians and bicyclists. For pedestrians, if no sidewalk or shoulder exists, this would standardize the right for a pedestrian to walk on the edge of the roadway. A passing vehicle must provide the person with a minimum of three feet or must yield to the pedestrian until able to do so.
- 4.3 Identify funding opportunities for implementing identified priorities, including exploring the possibility of a dedicated local funding source for construction.
- 4.4 Consider lowering the posted speed limit on local residential streets from 30 mph to 25 mph to provide greater consistency across the Plateau.
- 4.5 Approach the Town of Signal Mountain regarding completing the sidewalk gaps along James Boulevard near McCoy Farm and Gardens. Consider a cost-sharing structure to construct.
- 4.6 Evaluate traffic speeds and volumes as well as multimodal activity on the E. Brow Road. Implement appropriate traffic calming measures to support a safer shared street, such as signage and speed cushions.
- 4.7 Identify areas along shared streets where graded shoulders (grass or gravel) may be feasible to provide additional maneuvering and/or refuge space for non-motorized street users.
- 4.8 Install regulatory and warning signage along highly trafficked shared streets to improve driver awareness of the likely presence of non-motorized street users. Special attention should be given at blind horizontal and vertical curves. Key candidate streets include East Brow Road, Chestnut Avenue, and Forest Park Drive.

- 4.9 Using wayfinding signage, direct north-bound traffic traveling to Falling Water Falls State Natural Area on the W Road/ Anderson Pike to use Wilson Avenue.
- 4.10 Identify funds and implement a shared street on Laurel Avenue, including a crosswalk at Laurel Avenue and Anderson Pike, until a shared-use path can be constructed. Construct connector trails on the Pumpkin Patch and McCoy properties.
- 4.11 Monitor the outcomes of the envisioned TDOT feasibility study for constructing a Timesville Road-Shackleford Ridge Road connector.
- 4.12 Use the Roads and Safety Committee to identify which shared streets should be a priority for near-term implementation.
- 4.13 Continue to pursue TDOT's Multimodal Access Grant for constructing the envisioned shared use path along Taft Highway.
- 4.14 Participate in the TPO's Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and/or TPO Board to actively participate in long-range transportation planning and policy efforts in the region.
- 4.15 Identify critical locations in need of vegetation pruning and/or removal within the public right-of-way to improve sightlines along well-traveled pedestrian and bicycling routes, particularly those frequented by visitors. Clearance may also provide additional maneuvering and/or refuge space for pedestrians in areas along certain shared streets, such as Chestnut Avenue.

DO THIS WITHIN 5 YEARS

- 4.16 Coordinate with TDOT to monitor when Taft Highway is expected to be repaved. Identify locations where crosswalks are preferred for installation, if possible.
- 4.17 Explore the legality of utilizing Town of Walden right-of-way for potential trail development and evaluate resident support for off-road connections.
- 4.18 Approach the East Tennessee Natural Gas Company to evaluate the feasibility of trail development within their gas line easement.
- 4.19 Complete a follow-up evaluation of road-

ways where traffic calming was applied to measure the level of success. Identify additional measures as needed, as well as other streets that might benefit from such measures.

- 4.20 Evaluate the feasibility of a direct walking and bicycling connection into the new Walden's Ridge Park.
- 4.21 Identify short, low-stress connections that would extend walking and bicycling connectivity in the community, such as between Parsons Lane and the Wayside Presbyterian Church.
- 4.22 Evaluate improvements to the intersections of Fairmount Pike, Anderson Pike, and Taft Highway.
- 4.23 Consider developing a pedestrian, bicycle, and greenway master plan, parks plan, or comprehensive transportation plan for the community.
- 4.24 Identify a long-term speed enforcement strategy.

DO THIS WITHIN 20 YEARS

- 4.25 Monitor the completion of the proposed Cumberland Trail segment north of Walden, envisioned to cross Taft Highway in Sequatchie County, to identify potential connections and opportunities to capture hikers passing through.
- 4.26 Explore pursuing the bicycle-friendly community designation from the League of American Bicyclists.
- 4.27 Establish the proposed passive park at Taft Highway and Fairmount Pike.
- 4.28 Monitor the development and official designation of the proposed U.S. Bike Route (USBR) 121 in the Chattanooga region to potentially route through Walden.



5

A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT WALDEN

[sustainability]

Walden's natural features are arguably its greatest asset. These features helped shape the Walden of today and should continue to shape the Walden of the future. They are fragile, however. That does not mean that Walden cannot or should not grow. Reasonable growth can be supported, but it must be balanced with practices that are sensitive to the Town's natural features. The Town can adopt policies to ensure smarter, more sustainable growth.

KEY CONCEPTS

STEEP SLOPES

Steep topography is a key feature on Walden’s Ridge, and it is imperative to protect areas with steep slopes. Currently, Walden’s zoning restricts building on slopes greater than 25% to a single dwelling per lot. A key concept of this plan is to preserve all slopes of 25% and greater from any development (consistent with current regulations) with the possible exception of an important trail or road connection. Additionally, the Town should consider requiring engineered site plans for development on moderately steep slopes between 15% and just under 25%.

TREE PRESERVATION

Mature trees and forested areas are other important assets in Walden. While tree removal is necessary for some development, standards can help minimize tree canopy loss or replace it. A key concept of this plan is for the Town to adopt tree protection and replacement regulations. Such standards would require development to be designed to minimize significant tree removal and create a plan to replace trees through street trees, trees within formal open space, and individual lots.

STORMWATER

Excessive stormwater runoff from development can be detrimental to surrounding property and sensitive environmental features in general. Stormwater runoff is a concern given Walden’s geography. Management regulations in the Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations are limited. A key concept if for the Town to adopt comprehensive stormwater management regulations.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be included in any stormwater ordinance. Stormwater management has evolved greatly over the past twenty years or so from the standard detention pond. While detention and retention will continue to be a tool in stormwater management, there are many new tools that can

reduce and treat runoff before reaching a pond or bypassing it altogether. However, it should be noted that context is important when choosing management techniques. This plan recommends that resources like the Light Imprint Handbook and others be used as a guide for determining the best tools for a particular location.

SPOTLIGHT
THE LIGHT IMPRINT
HANDBOOK

The “Light Imprint Handbook” guides where and how to use certain low-impact stormwater management techniques based on context or place within a community. The handbook was written by Tom Low, formerly with the world-renowned planning and design firm DPZCo (designers of Seaside, Florida), and Low “advocates that stormwater be returned to the aquifer without being channeled far from its original location.” The handbook organizes the tools into four basic categories: Paving, Channeling, Storage, and Filtration. The tools are further classified by context (rural to urban) and other factors such as slope, cost, and maintenance. The handbook concludes with several case studies showing the effectiveness of this approach.



Stormwater techniques such as planters and pervious paving (below), rain gardens (right), and bioswales (bottom, right) are just a few of the tools that can help to reduce and treat stormwater at the source. The right tools depend on context within the neighborhood as well as topographic and soil conditions.



WASTEWATER

Wastewater treatment is a significant constraint for the Town of Walden, particularly related to the development of a Town Center. The Town is largely without access to sewer and depends on individual septic systems. The Moccasin Bend treatment facility is at capacity, and there is currently a moratorium on new connections to the existing sewer system (primarily affecting Signal Mountain). The Hamilton County Wastewater Treatment Authority has no immediate plans to expand the existing facility. That leaves future growth in Walden stymied with few alternatives. One alternative would be to work with Sequatchie County on the possibility of extending sewer service from there to Walden. This alternative is likely best but will have a significant cost and lengthy implementation. The other alternative is to consider a decentralized wastewater treatment system for the Town Center area.

Decentralized systems are similar to conventional septic systems, with the exception that the secondary treatment is separate from the primary treatment. Typically, each unit has its own septic tank (sometimes groups of units share a tank), and the effluent is then pumped to a secondary treatment area. This type of system has been used successfully in locations with topographic constraints and mixed-use development, such as Serenbe in Chattahoochee Hills, GA (see sidebar next page).

The challenge of such a system for Walden, however, may be its topography and shallow soils. Adapting the system to Walden’s conditions may add a significant cost, the impact of which is beyond the scope of this plan. Nevertheless, these systems have been promoted by the Environmental Protection Agency as a good alternative to conventional sewer and septic, and if maintained properly, good for the environment. A key concept in this plan is for the Town to initiate further study into this type of system

SPOTLIGHT SERENBE

Serenbe is a 1,000 acre new, private development community in the rural hills of Chattahoochee Hills, GA. The community is comprised of three hamlets, each with a mixture of uses and housing types in a compact, pedestrian-friendly arrangement. At completion, the community will have preserved 70% of its land in natural open space. Currently, Serenbe boasts about 800 residents.

Since the site had no sewer and the developer was committed to urban, green building, the development features a decentralized wastewater treatment system that utilizes constructed wetlands and sand filter to treat wastewater for reuse as irrigation. The community and its commitment to sustainable building practices has led it to receiving several awards.



and its use in the Town Center while continuing to work with Signal Mountain, Hamilton County, and Sequatchie County on a comprehensive sewer strategy.

LIGHT POLLUTION

Another concern that arose during the charrette was that of light pollution from new development. The concern is valid, particularly when you consider the potential for commercial development and lighting for buildings, streets, sidewalks, and parking areas. Walden's zoning has no current standards for site and building lighting. A key concept is for the Town to adopt lighting standards for, at a minimum, the Taft Highway focus area.

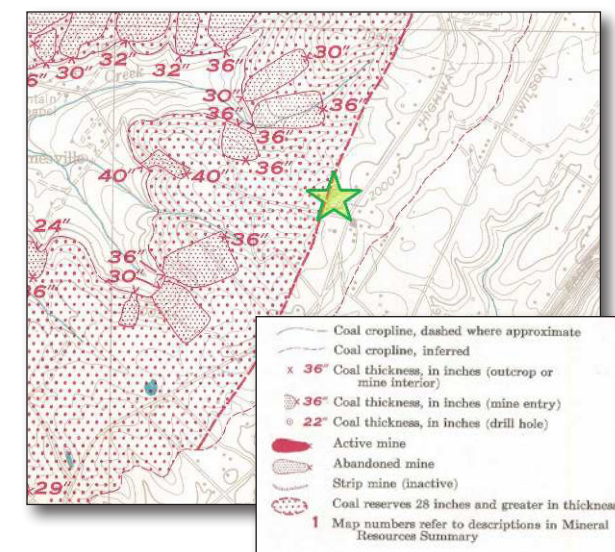
The town should consult information from the International Dark Sky Association, which produced a model lighting ordinance for municipalities in conjunction with the Illuminating Engineering Society of America.



Outdoor lighting has a variety of aesthetics. The key to minimizing light pollution is to choose fixtures with shields that direct light down to the ground or directly on the object.

LEGACY MINE RECLAMATION

Abandoned legacy coal mines in the area of the proposed Town Center have been discussed as a threat to waterbodies from runoff and a potential constraint to future development. A May 2021 article in the Tennessee Lookout reported that a recent study by the Ohio Valley Institute estimated that it would cost \$126 million to clean up the 14,000 acres of known mines in Tennessee. This number is well above the annual state and federal budgets for mine cleanup. Despite the hefty price tag, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Abandoned Mine Land Program has made progress having spent over \$44 million in state and federal funding to reclaim over 4,000 acres of abandoned mines since 1981. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture monitors water quality associated with abandoned mine runoff and offers best management practices for reclamation. A key concept of this plan is the Town to work with state officials in the Land Reclamation Section to study the Walden area for potential reclamation projects.



Fairmount Sewanee Coal Map showing coal locations in Walden. The heart of Walden's Town Center is where the green star is located.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(0, 5, 20-YEAR TIMEFRAME)

DO THIS NOW

- 5.1 Adopt supplemental standards to provide more guidance for protecting steep slopes from significant development
- 5.2 Adopt stormwater management standards for the Taft Highway Focus Area that incorporate location-specific Light Imprint stormwater techniques to mitigate runoff
- 5.3 Adopt lighting standards for non-residential and Town Center development
- 5.4 Conduct a study to determine the effectiveness of a decentralized wastewater treatment system for development within the Town Center
- 5.5 Work with Signal Mountain, Hamilton County, and Sequatchie County to develop a comprehensive sewer strategy for Walden and the region

DO THIS WITHIN 5 YEARS

- 5.6 Adopt tree preservation and replacement standards in areas where growth is planned to occur, such as along Taft Highway

DO THIS WITHIN 20 YEARS

- 5.7 Work with TDEC's Land Reclamation Section to identify potential abandoned mine reclamation projects, which can be added to the Abandoned Mine Land Program
- 5.8 Begin implementation of the comprehensive sewer strategy

An aerial sketch of a town center, showing a grid of streets, various buildings including houses and commercial structures, and numerous trees. The sketch is rendered in a light, artistic style with some color washes. A large, dark blue rounded rectangle is overlaid on the top left corner, containing the number '6' and the title 'THE HEART OF WALDEN'.

6

THE HEART OF WALDEN

[a new town center]

As established earlier in this plan, if new commercial development comes to Walden, it should have a walkable, mixed-use character. The uniqueness of a community's heart does not come from a suburban, commercial strip of franchise architecture but rather how its buildings, streets, and public spaces work together to create a sense of place.

ILLUSTRATIONS AND IMAGERY IN THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is not intended to establish a specific master plan or site plan for Walden's Town Center. It is intended to provide a framework that establishes the qualities a successful center should exhibit. Likewise, the illustrative plans, renderings, and precedent imagery should not be considered as the actual design of Walden's Town Center, but as a guide for its desired character and a foundation for changes to the Town's development regulations. The reality is that there are multiple property owners in the focus area and the ultimate design of Walden's Town Center will be affected by many factors including natural constraints, infrastructure constraints, and market realities. While these factors must be addressed, none diminish the will of the community to set the tone of their vision for Walden's heart.

KEY CONCEPTS • THE VIBRANT CENTER OF A SMALL COMMUNITY

A vibrant town center includes a mixture of uses that serve the needs of the community and visitors. It features a form and character where buildings, sidewalks, and streets work together to create a public space where people feel comfortable walking and lingering. Careful attention must be given to the placement, height, and massing of buildings to achieve this. Parking and access are critical as well because few things make a street less walkable than a sea of asphalt parking and continuous curb cuts for vehicles. To a slightly less extent, the architecture and landscaping of a place also contribute to its character. However, it is not necessary to force a particular style of architecture to achieve a great street. It is more important to make sure the basic elements of a building and site complement the street. The following guidance is intended to reinforce and supplement the Place Type policy established in Chapter 2.

Building Placement, Height, and Massing

Buildings are placed close to the street but may feature occasional recesses to accommodate outdoor dining or a small courtyard. Ultimately, however, the goal should be to create a fairly consistent building face along the street. This helps to define the sidewalk and street space, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Building height will be limited due to infrastructure and other site constraints, but a low-rise character is also appropriate to the character of Walden. Ground-level retail, however, typically has a higher ceiling than upper floors. Buildings should also have smaller footprints or resemble buildings with smaller footprints to minimize their mass.

Parking and Access

Parking is necessary for Walden’s Town Center, but it should be in the background of the center, or, at the very least, screened from the street—with the sole exception of on-street

parking. Individual buildings should not have their own parking, but rather parking should be consolidated to encourage a “park once” concept where you park once and walk between various destinations. Access should be limited to what is necessary to accommodate personal and service vehicles.

Architecture

Concerning the details of buildings, articulation and transparency are important. Articulation is the use of elements such as slight shifts in the building facade or the use of openings to reduce the mass of a building. Similarly, transparency—the use of windows and doors—is an important consideration in the character of a street. Buildings with retail at street level should feature significantly more windows, or shopfronts, than residential uses at street level or on upper levels. It is recommended that shopfronts be required on buildings fronting the Town Square to encourage retail/dining uses at street level. This plan does not recommend the establishment of a particular style of architecture. Still, it recommends creating a palette of materials and architectural features derived from Walden’s historic character and other mountain towns. This palette should provide a jumping-off point for architectural creativity.

Landscaping

Unlike lots with single buildings and yards on all sides, landscaping should be more formal in the Town Center. Primary landscaping should be in the form of street trees within planters that also help mitigate stormwater runoff. Secondary landscaping should be used to soften courtyards, and shallow setbacks, as well as screen refuse containers, equipment, or, if necessary, parking areas from the street. Along Taft Highway, a natural landscape buffer should be maintained to reduce the visual impact of new development



TOWN CENTER ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

- A** Current Town Hall and Pumpkin Patch Playground

B Town Square framed by 1 to 2.5 story mixed-use buildings with wide, tree-lined sidewalks

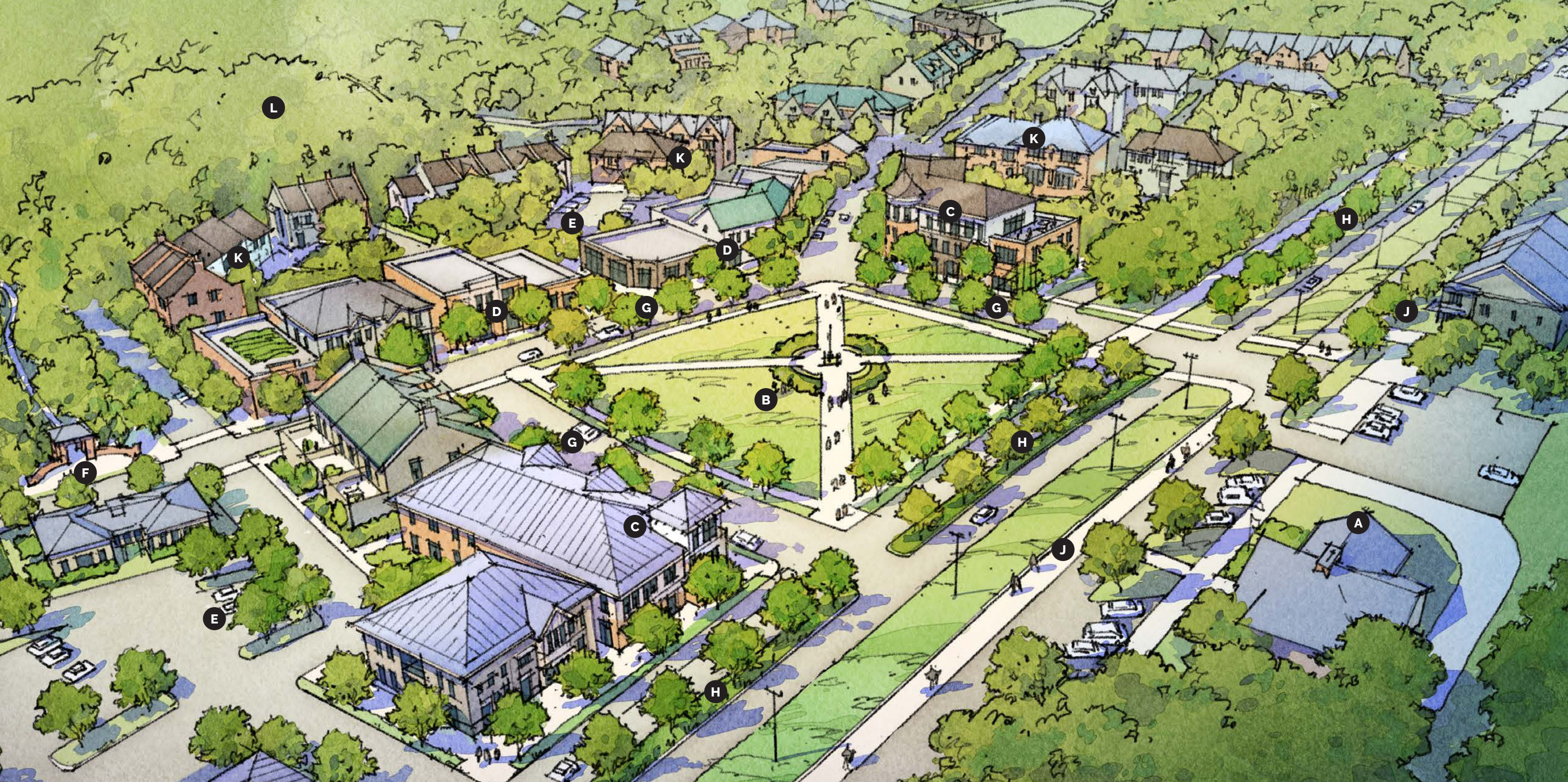
C Parking behind or tucked below buildings as topography permits

D New pedestrian-friendly street connecting center to roundabout and neighborhood
- E** Townhouses and similar housing types create a transition to less intense areas

F Single-family detached and similar housing types create a transition to large lot areas

G Trailhead connecting new trail network to the center

H Low-intensity commercial or residential infill along Taft and the frontage road



TOWN CENTER ILLUSTRATION

- A** Current Town Hall and Pumpkin Patch Playground
- B** Square as focal point of the Town Center framed by buildings
- C** Low-rise commercial or mixed-use buildings built close to wide sidewalks
- D** Buildings vary in height and articulation to minimize massive uninterrupted facades.
- E** Parking is located to the rear or below structures when topography allows
- F** Trails through natural areas connect to the Town Center at strategic points
- G** Town Center streets should feature wide sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parking
- H** Tree-lined median incorporated into Taft Highway along Town Center frontage
- I** Maintain natural buffer along edge of Taft Highway where possible
- J** Multi-purpose path on the east side of Taft Highway along the frontage road
- K** Transition from Town Center with mixture of housing types on pedestrian-friendly streets
- L** Preserve sensitive environmental features and substantial open space in a natural state



PRECEDENT IMAGERY

Pg. 64, left to right, top to bottom: Buildings with retail and dining uses should have shopfronts at street level to create an inviting streetscape. Buildings incorporate a mix of materials found in Walden and other mountain towns as well as pedestrian-friendly signage, awnings, lighting, and other features. Buildings vary slightly in placement and form to promote variety. Small courtyards provide opportunities for outdoor dining and seating. Buildings frame streets that are designed to naturally calm traffic. Buildings with residential forms are appropriate in small rural mountain towns. Well-designed and articulated urban buildings are also appropriate.

Pg. 65, left to right, top to bottom: Village-inspired residential buildings arranged in a manner to create semi-private courtyards. Residential buildings built close to the street with porches and stoops adjacent to the sidewalk. Small footprint multi-family successfully integrated into the streetscape. Streets should accommodate street trees and on-street parking where possible. Slope permitting, parking can be tucked under houses off a service lane.

KEY CONCEPTS • HOUSING
CHOICE FOR MULTIPLE
GENERATIONS

A key component of a successful Town Center is the inclusion of housing. Residential uses should not be in a single building type but rather a mixture of detached and attached housing types seamlessly integrated into the center along with an interconnected system of streets and blocks. This arrangement provides for housing choice that meets a variety of needs for all walks of life. Similar to the more commercial heart of the Town Center, the form and character of its residential streets are equally important to promote the walkability of a community. It is envisioned that neighborhood layout would respond to the natural features of the area. The following guidance is intended to reinforce and supplement the Town Center Neighborhood Place Type policy in Chapter 2.

Building Placement, Height, and Massing

On neighborhood residential streets, buildings continue to be an important way of framing the streets. However, on residential streets, buildings should have some front yard between the building and the sidewalk. Front yards should not be deep as in more suburban and rural settings but may vary based on topography. Unlike more commercial areas, buildings often include porches and stoops that provide an elevated, semi-private space between the interior of the building and the street. The height and massing of buildings should be limited, and groups of dwellings, such as townhouses, should have occasional breaks to reduce perceived mass.

Parking and access

Ideally, parking is located to the rear of dwellings and accessed by a rear lane or alley. Walden’s topographic conditions warrant some leniency in this regard. Where lots drop off significantly, there are two approaches to parking. First, parking can be tucked under a building.

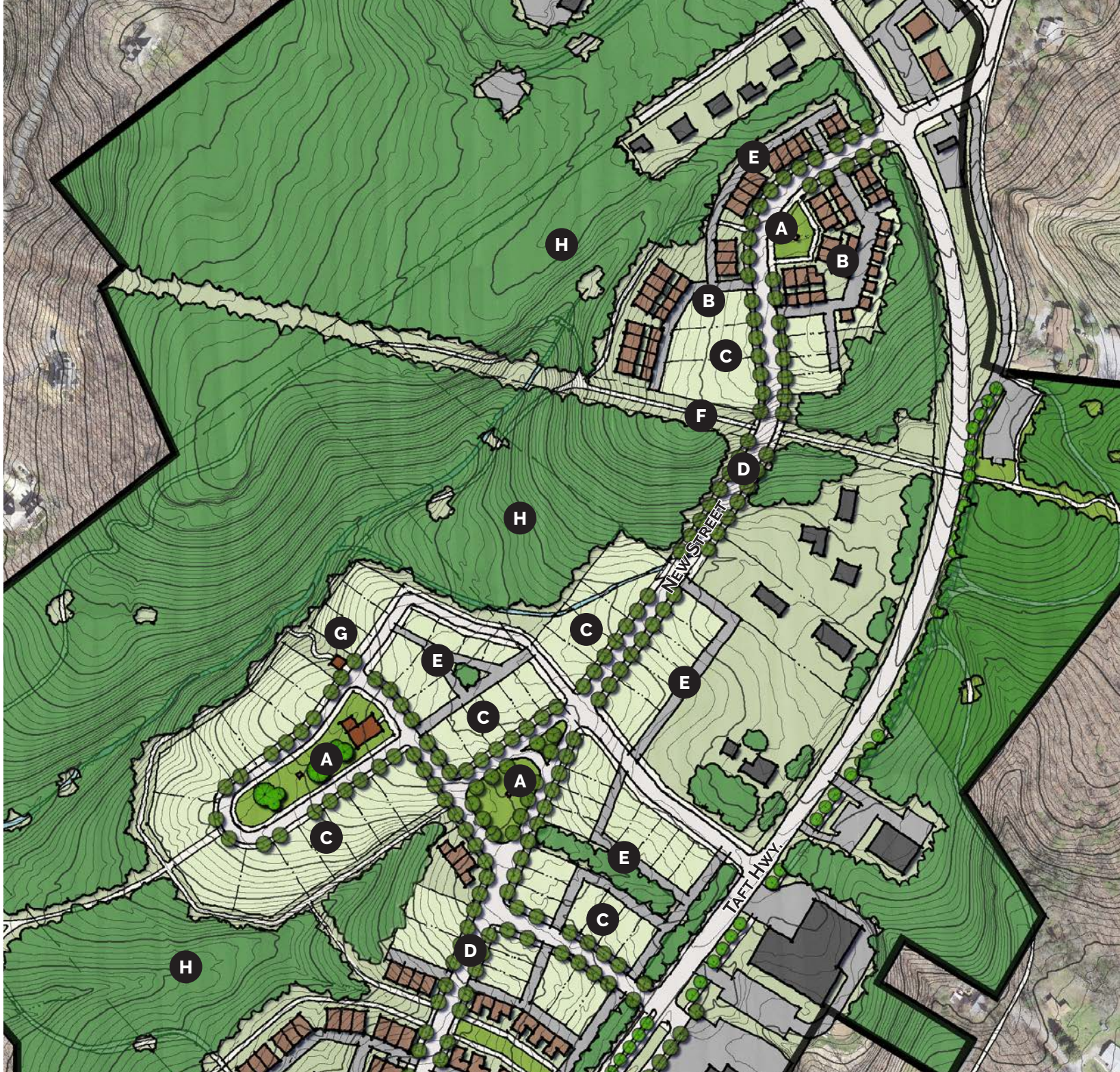
Second, parking can be accessed from the front of the lot, and the garage either recessed from the front facade or the garage and house form a parking court along the street. The key is to de-emphasize the parking and the garage to the extent possible.

Architecture

Similar to the more commercial heart of the Town Center, it is more important to address basic building components to ensure that buildings present a good face to the street than push a particular style. This can be accomplished by establishing basic standards for facades, openings (windows and doors), roofs, and other elements (porches, stoops, etc.). An acceptable material palette should also be considered, but recent changes in state law have limited the ability of municipalities to enforce such standards on residential buildings. Instead, it may need to be limited to recommendations.

Landscaping

Landscaping in the form of street trees is just as important in residential areas as it is in the heart of the center. Landscaping can also be used to soften the base of buildings between porches and streets. A light hand is recommended when it comes to landscaping standards on private property, but encouraging it is suggested.



TOWN CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

- A** Neighborhood greens provide space for active and passive recreation
- B** A mixture of housing types in a compact village-like arrangement
- C** A mixture of lots and housing types fronting a network of pedestrian-friendly streets
- D** New pedestrian-friendly street connecting neighborhood to Town Center
- E** Rear lanes provide access to parking where topography permits
- F** Trail along utility easement with potential connection to greater Walden
- G** Trailhead connecting new trail network to the neighborhood
- H** Substantial amount of preserved open space provides transition and reduces footprint



TOWN CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD ILLUSTRATION

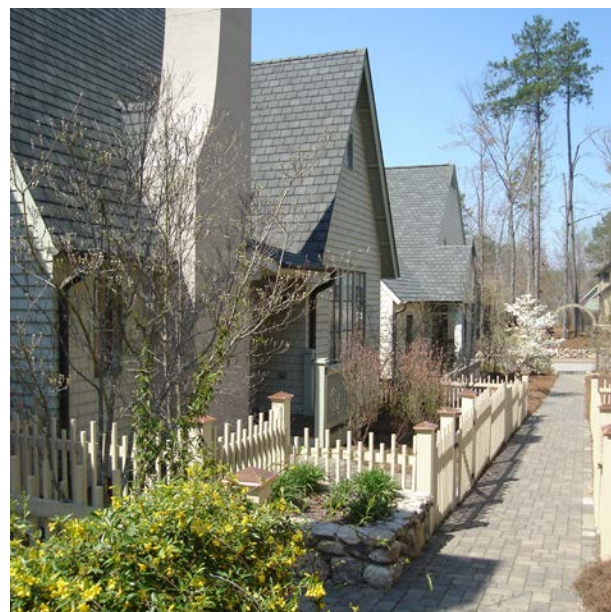
- A** Triangular green beautifies, slows traffic, and provides opportunity for green infrastructure
- B** Streets are interconnected providing multiple paths for circulation
- C** Streets are designed to accommodate vehicular and bicycle traffic
- D** Planting strips create opportunities for street trees and/or green infrastructure
- E** Sidewalks encourage walking and provide a safe and alternative mode of transportation
- F** Trails through natural areas connect to the neighborhood at strategic points
- G** Shallow front yards can incorporate stone walls to work with topographic change
- H** Porches and stoops create semi-private space between sidewalk and building
- I** Streets, blocks, and buildings shift and undulate to work with the topography
- J** An integrated mixture of building types provides housing choice
- K** Changes in elevation and articulation create variety in the streetscape
- L** The Town Center Neighborhood connects directly with the Town Center

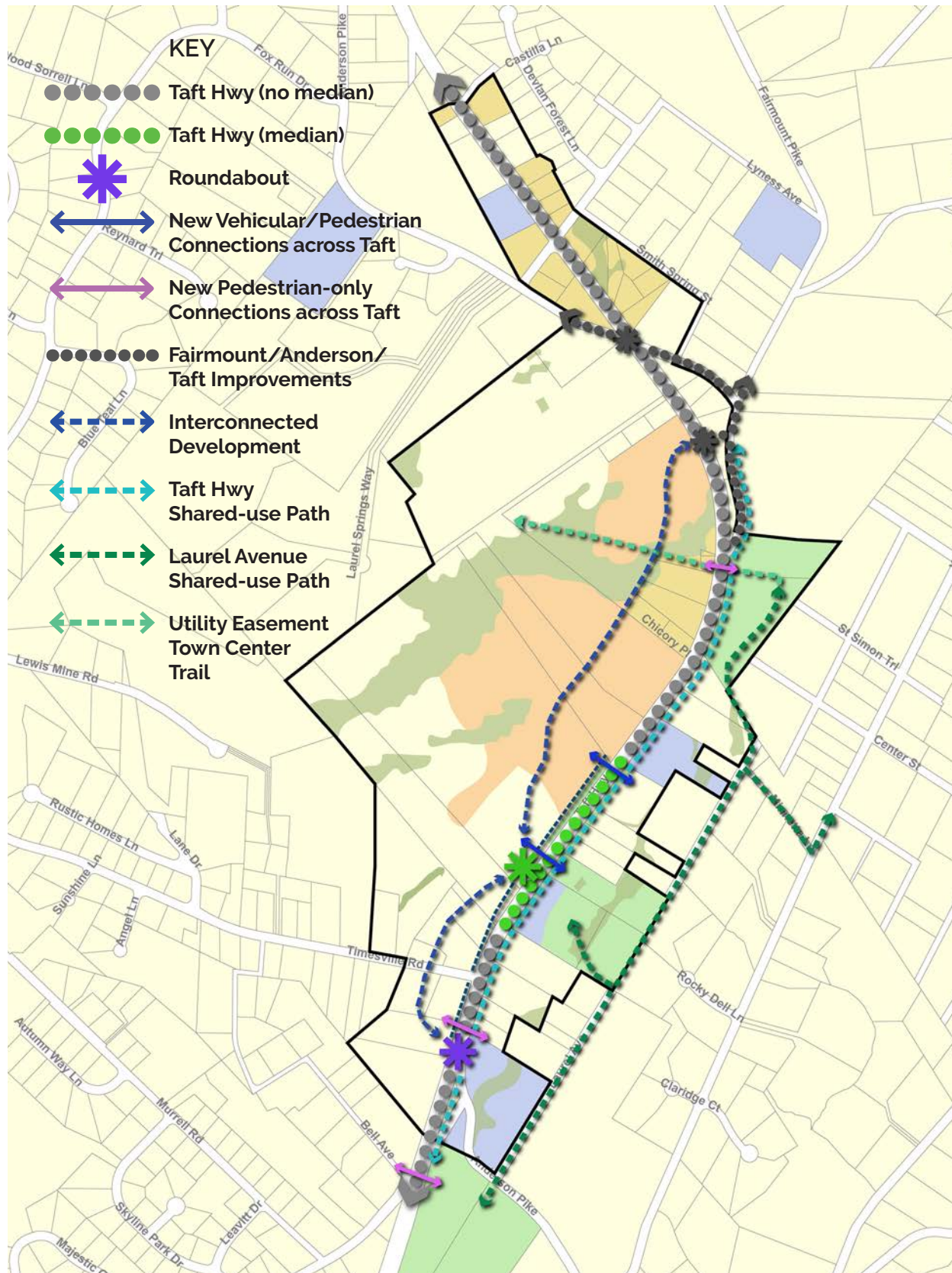


PRECEDENT IMAGERY

Pg. 70, left to right, top to bottom: One-story townhouses provide single-level living opportunities. Single-family houses with a small footprint can maintain mature vegetation on the lot creating instant value. Residential buildings should step with topography and incorporate mountain town elements such as stone piers and foundations. Formal open spaces can be created to preserve mature vegetation or a unique stand of trees. Besides fronting streets, residential buildings may also front courtyards and pedestrian passages where topographic constraints prevent streets.

Pg. 71, left to right, top to bottom: For sites sloping down from the street, a front-loaded house and garage can be arranged to create a parking court. Buildings should front and frame formal open spaces. Porches help to create a transition between the building and the public realm along the street. Residential buildings can incorporate a variety of materials found in Walden and similar rural mountain towns, including board and batten siding as well as stone, brick, stucco, shakes, and lap siding. Trails should weave through residential areas for recreation and added connectivity.





MOBILITY CONCEPTS IN THE TAFT HIGHWAY FOCUS AREA

KEY CONCEPTS • A CENTER FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS, AS WELL AS CARS

Another key component in creating a village-like character in Walden's Town Center is designing streets for multiple modes of transportation. Narrowing lane widths, providing ample sidewalk width, encouraging on-street parking, placing utilities underground, and incorporating street trees are all important for creating new streets that are naturally traffic-calmed. There are other interventions, however, that can be equally important to make the entire transportation system within the Town Center work in a safer, more pleasant manner for all.

Roundabout at Taft and Anderson

A roundabout at the Taft Highway and Anderson Pike (W Road) intersection could provide operational and safety benefits, particularly for vehicular traffic. Currently unsignalized, intersection queues and delays have increased, especially during peak hours. A lack of traffic control along the Taft Highway corridor, in general, reduces the available gaps in traffic for turning vehicles.

The Illustrative Plan depicts a conceptual design for a roundabout at the intersection of Taft Highway. While the precise location and design requires additional study, the concept illustrates how the roundabout can improve the operation of this key intersection, create an opportunity to connect Timesville Road (and the Town Center) to the intersection, and creates a gateway into Walden with a focal point for art or sculpture in the center. Below is an image of a roundabout in Nashville, TN.

Given heavy directional peak hour movements, a roundabout can provide additional efficiency and capacity beyond a traffic signal.

Beyond vehicular benefits, this intersection is a critical nexus for walking and bicycling connectivity given its location near McCoy Farm and Gardens, James Boulevard, and the Town Center. The new roundabout could incorporate safe crosswalks for adjoining sidewalk and shared use path infrastructure where traffic is being physically slowed and sightlines are optimized. Finally, Walden's Town Center Plan identified the construction of two gateway monuments along Taft Highway to physically distinguish where the Town Center begins and ends, one of which being located at the Anderson Pike (W Road) intersection. The roundabout could provide a prime opportunity for further enhancing this gateway from an aesthetic, built environment, and transportation perspective. Gaining control of the two properties currently for sale on the west side of Taft near the proposed roundabout could generate momentum.



Taft Highway in the Town Center

For the Town Center, the typical cross-section includes a landscaped median for the length of the frontage road. Widening the existing highway would be required to accommodate the median. Proper vehicular sightlines must be maintained if street trees are used, meaning trees should be strategically placed and/or pruned in accordance with TDOT roadway design standards. Median cuts would only occur at intersections with the incorporation of turn lanes at high-volume intersections.

A sidewalk is envisioned for the west side of Taft Highway, while the proposed shared use path would be largely located outside of the highway's right-of-way using an easement on the eastern side. Furthermore, the shared use path would, ideally, be located on the eastern side of the frontage road to provide maximum access, safety, and comfort for those walking and bicycling to nearby destinations. This location for the path minimizes the number of conflict points with vehicles to only driveway locations.



TAFT HWY CONCEPTUAL IMPROVEMENTS

- A** Shared-use path and parking on east side and sidewalk on west side
- B** Center median with trees from beginning of frontage road to Ace Hardware driveway
- C** Connect to Town Center Neighborhood across Taft at Ace Hardware driveway
- D** Connect to Town Center at Pumpkin Patch driveway (potential signal location)
- E** Improvements to frontage road include shared-use path and street trees



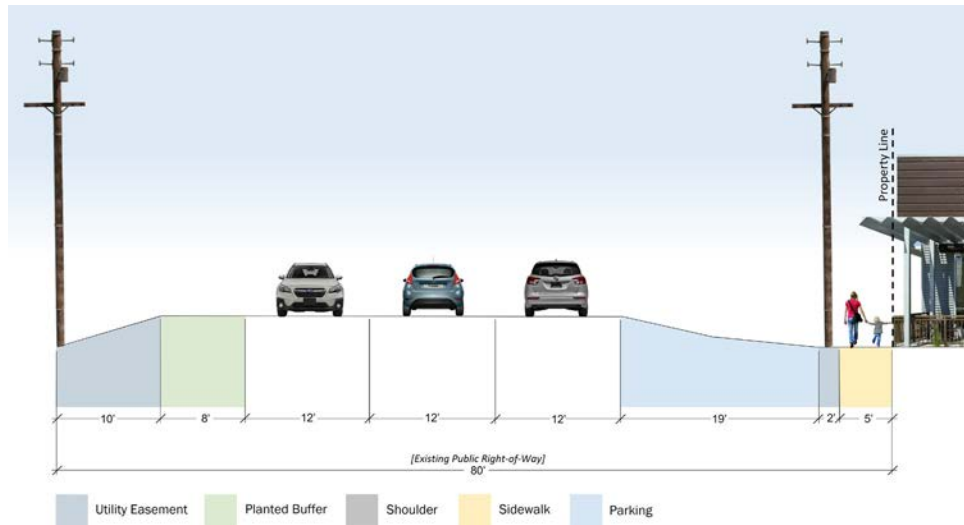
Precedent imagery of a shared-use path (Source: Rundell Ernstberger Associates, LLC. Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, 2021. www.pedbikeinfo.org)



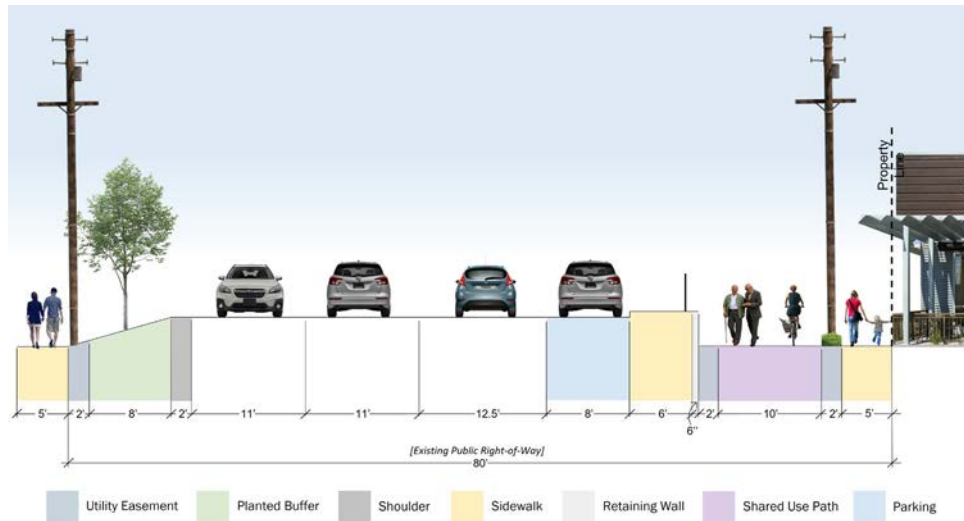
TAFT HWY EXISTING SECTION MODEL IN TOWN CENTER AREA



TAFT HWY CONCEPTUAL SECTION MODEL IN TOWN CENTER AREA



TAFT HWY EXISTING SECTION IN TIMESVILLE RD COMMERCIAL AREA



TAFT HWY CONCEPTUAL SECTION IN TIMESVILLE RD COMMERCIAL AREA

Timesville Road Commercial Area

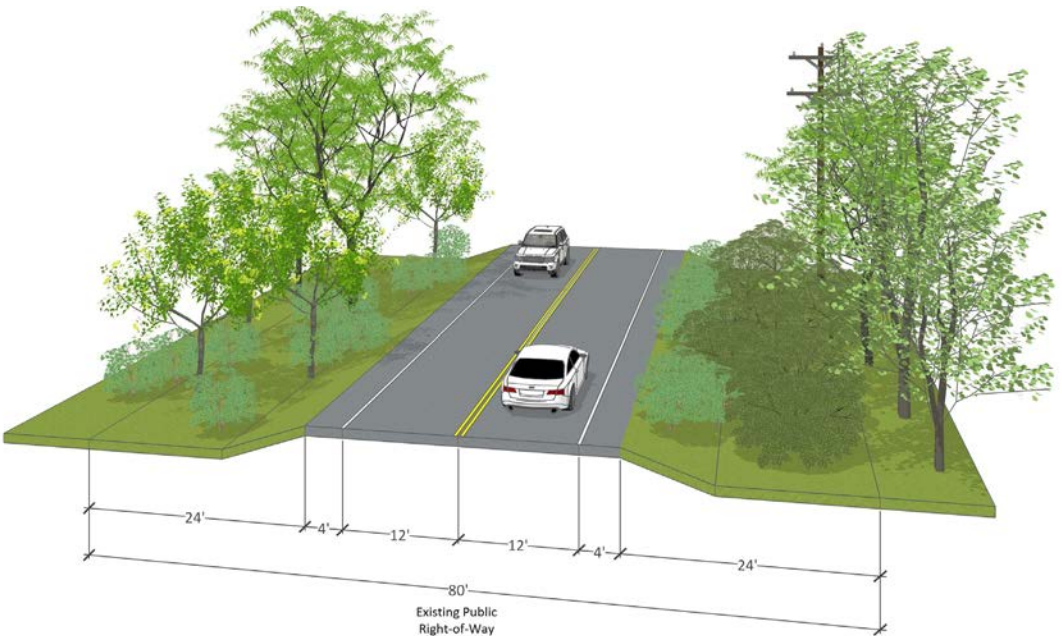
The existing commercial buildings at Timesville Road are built up to the Taft Highway right-of-way, which is indicated by the transmission pole. The paved shoulder has been used as striped on-street angled parking for these businesses. To better accommodate all roadway users in the existing Town Center, specifically the envisioned shared use path, the Taft Highway cross-section would need to be altered. The existing paved shoulder on the west side would need to be narrowed to accommodate a shift in the travel lanes, which also might require addi-

tional shoulder grading or pavement based on local conditions. Shifting the lanes would allow for some of the on-street parking to be maintained (i.e., parallel parking), while accommodating passenger unloading, the shared use path and required clear zones, and the existing sidewalk in front of the businesses. Bulb-outs with understory street trees are envisioned to break up the parallel parking spots. The sidewalk on the westside in this section is envisioned to be outside of the right-of-way.

Outside Town Center

The proposed typical cross-section outside of the Town Center does not differ from the existing in terms of the roadway configuration. It is envisioned to stay as a two-lane roadway with twelve-foot travel lanes and four-foot shoulders with turn lanes provided at high-volume inter-

sections. The shared use path would go on the east side within the existing right-of-way given the number of destinations located on this side of the highway. A 10' planted buffer would be provided between the edge of roadway and the shared use path, in accordance with TDOT roadway design standards.



TAFT HWY EXISTING SECTION OUTSIDE OF TOWN CENTER AREA



TAFT HWY CONCEPTUAL SECTION OUTSIDE OF TOWN CENTER AREA



Illustrative Plan with interconnectivity highlighted between the proposed roundabout, through the center, and a potential Fairmount Pike realignment

Fairmount/Anderson/Taft Improvements

The Fairmount Pike and Anderson Pike intersections with Taft Highway are currently skewed, limiting sightlines and increasing queues for turning vehicles. An intersection improvement project should be evaluated for increasing safety and operations at one or both of these intersections. Fairmount, in particular, has been experiencing increasing delays during peak hours. One concept would be to realign Fairmount to form a 90-degree orientation with Taft just north of the electrical substation. Should development occur on the west side of Taft, a new roadway to the Town Center could connect at the newly aligned Fairmount, potentially warranting a traffic signal. Challenges include the acquisition of right-of-way.

Another concept is to make Fairmount one way north from Taft to Anderson. Southbound traffic on Fairmount would be redirected to an improved intersection at Anderson Pike and Taft Highway. This concept could also potentially warrant a signal. Downsides include the need to address the skewness of this intersection and the missed opportunity to create a signalized intersection at a new street connecting to the Town Center. Furthermore, the intersection at Fairmount and Anderson would likely need to be reconfigured to accommodate turning large vehicles and vehicles pulling trailers. This would likely require the acquisition of right-of-way.

Additional study is necessary to determine the best solution that addresses vehicular traffic and best serves destinations to the north of the Town Center, including the Civic League and Bachman Community Center.

Interconnected Development

Development in the Town Center will likely develop incrementally. It is crucial that developments along the west side of Taft be designed so they are interconnected. First, this creates an alternative, pedestrian-friendly, naturally-calmed connection between greater Walden and the Town Center, which reduces dependence on Taft Highway. Second, it creates a seamless transition between neighborhood and center instead of a succession of disconnected development.

KEY CONCEPTS • CIVIC SPACES

A third key component to a vibrant Town Center beyond buildings and streets are civic spaces and facilities. Such spaces come in many shapes and sizes, but there are some key attributes of each. Civic spaces should be integrated into centers and neighborhoods, not formed from leftover open space. They should be framed by buildings and enfronted by streets or sidewalks where possible. Finally, they should provide usable outdoor space and, in some instances, incorporate techniques to mitigate stormwater runoff. The following is intended as guidance for the Town in reviewing civic space in a proposed development.

Illustrative Plan showing buildings fronting the Town Square (right). Precedent imagery for Town Squares illustrating formal landscaping, on-street parking options, civic art, sidewalks and other features common to a central gathering space in the heart of a community (below and bottom right)



Town Square

The heart of the Town Center should feature a central, formal open space. In the concept showing in the Illustrative Plan, the Town Square is located on a high point. It includes streets on all sides and buildings with active ground floor uses to frame the space. Landscaping consists primarily of perimeter trees; however, it is advantageous to incorporate some mature trees within the space. In this area, some level of grading will be required, limiting the ability to do that. Another benefit is that the alignment of this space with the Town Hall and Pumpkin Patch and the connection across Taft that can be improved with signalization.



Neighborhood Greens

It is important to incorporate neighborhood greens in a variety of locations within a neighborhood. In the Illustrative Plan, several different types of greens have been shown: a long, linear green on the nose of a gentle ridge; a triangular green preserving an existing drainage pattern; several smaller greens framed by dwelling units and enfronted with sidewalks. The triangular green serves a dual purpose in that it is located along a key connector between Taft Highway to the north and the heart of the center to the south and helps to calm through traffic. Most of these spaces are formal, manicured areas for active or passive recreation, but in some instances, these spaces can simply be preserved because of a specific natural feature or grove of trees.



Illustrative Plan showing opportunities for neighborhood greens (top, left). Precedent imagery for neighborhood greens, which can be formal (above, middle) or informal (above). Illustrative Plan showing opportunity for passive park on Town-owned land around the gas easement

Passive Park

The 1998 Town Center Plan recommended a passive park on Town-owned property on Taft Highway south of Fairmount Pike. Walden's Ridge Emergency Services owns a parcel directly to the south. This plan envisions the implementation of this passive park as another amenity for Walden. Instead of a formal, manicured space, this park would retain its natural character and include trails for hiking. These trails could connect the Laurel Avenue Trail to the shared-use path along Taft and even connect to a trail along the gas line easement if implemented. A small parking area would need to be provided that could be accessed from Fairmount Pike. The park could also serve as a location for a trail along the gas line easement to cross Taft either below via tunnel or possibly at a pedestrian signal.



Trails

This plan envisions that a large portion of development parcels will be preserved from development. While some of these areas contain extremely steep slopes or other environmentally sensitive features, like Middle Creek, they offer an opportunity to incorporate passive recreation through hiking trails. Beyond the health benefits, these trails would allow residents to experience portions of Walden in its natural state. Encouraging these trails is recommended.



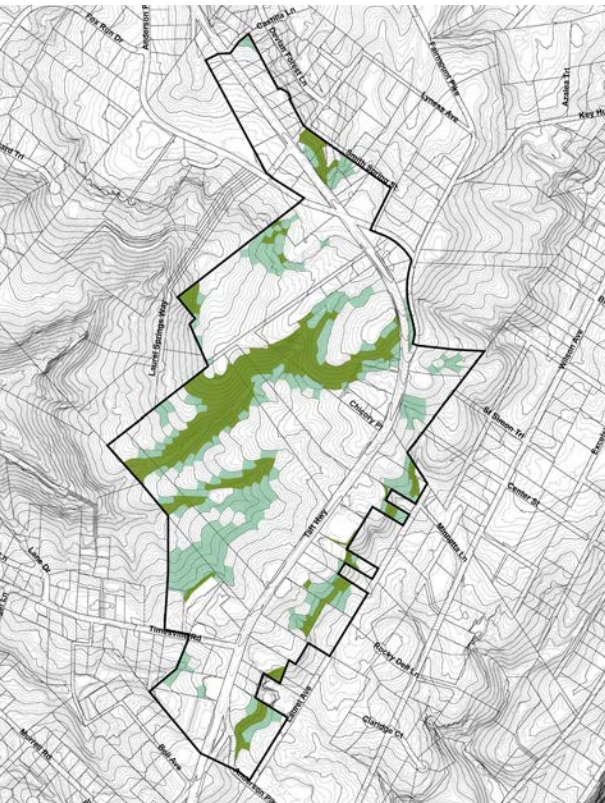
Precedent imagery for trails through natural areas (top) and structures that can be placed near trailheads (above, left). Diagram illustrates analysis of moderate and extremely steep slopes based on GIS topographic data in the focus area (above, right).

KEY CONCEPTS • A
SUSTAINABLE TOWN CENTER

Sustainability is discussed more broadly in Chapter 5, but it is important to draw attention to several key concepts for the proposed Town Center.

Steep Slopes

During the charrette, the consultant team completed a cursory slope analysis of lands in the focus area. The study identified moderately steep slopes (15%-25%) and extremely steep slopes (25%+). It was conceptual, based on available data, but it was useful in defining areas to be wary of or preserve altogether. As stated in Chapter 5, this plan envisions updating development standards related to slopes. Development proposals should include a study on steep slopes based on topographic surveys, not GIS info, to inform the layout of the development and preserve these sensitive features.





Open space

The Illustrative Plan shows a substantial amount of open space preserved in the Town Center. A portion of this open space is due to extremely steep slopes but given infrastructure constraints and the rural mountain character of Walden, this plan envisions preserving land beyond that which is constrained to create an appropriate transition from the Town Center to surrounding private land. The proposed amount of preserved open space should be a minimum of 50% and may include environmentally constrained property. Development preserving a large amount of natural open space should be allowed to have a more compact development pattern and potentially a modest increase in overall density, as long as the development can be adequately served with infrastructure. Any updated regulations should consider the impact of this approach on smaller parcels.

Green Streets

As described in Chapter 5, it is recommended that the Town adopt a stormwater ordinance that includes best management practices for stormwater runoff. Ideally, development proposals in the Town Center should include a variety of tools to collect and treat runoff that doesn't solely rely on large ponds. This should help to minimize grading.



Illustrative Plan highlighting preservation of more than 50% on large parcels and highly conceptual locations for wastewater treatment or stormwater management (above, left). Precedent imagery illustrates the interface between the natural and the built environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(0, 5, 20-YEAR TIMEFRAME)

DO THIS NOW

- 6.1 To implement the concepts for the Town Center, update the VC-1 district or replace it with a new district that includes the following:
 - Review of appropriate land uses
 - Standards related to the layout of streets, blocks, and civic spaces
 - A minimum requirement for preserved natural open space
 - Building placement, height, and massing standards
 - Parking and access standards
 - Architectural standards
 - Landscaping standards
 - Signage standards
- 6.2 To implement the concepts of the Town Center neighborhood, create a new zoning district that includes the following:
 - Review of appropriate land uses
 - Standards related to the layout of streets, blocks, and civic spaces
 - A minimum requirement for preserved natural open space
 - Building placement, height, and massing standards
 - Parking and access standards
 - Basic architectural standards
 - Basic landscaping standards
- 6.3 Adopt a development review process that includes submittal materials necessary to adequately review development proposals for adherence to development standards and this Plan.
- 6.4 Request traffic control evaluations from TDOT for key intersections experiencing peak hour delays, including Taft Highway/Anderson Pike and Taft Highway/Fairmount Pike. Begin discussion with TDOT Region staff regarding desire for potential roundabout and intersection realignment, as well as Taft Highway widening (i.e.,

addition of landscaped median).

- 6.5 Participate in the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization's (TPO) plan development process for the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan. When they do a "call for projects", submit the Taft Highway project.
- 6.6 Develop a strong working relationship with the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA) and express support for updating the Walden's Ridge Plateau Area Plan, which was last updated in 1997.

DO THIS WITHIN 5 YEARS

- 6.7 Work with the Land Trust for Tennessee or similar organization to develop a plan to place preserved open space in permanent conservation easements.
- 6.8 Evaluate improvements to the intersections of Fairmount Pike, Anderson Road, and Taft Highway

DO THIS WITHIN 20 YEARS

- 6.9 Revisit the revised standards in Walden's development regulations and update accordingly.

7

IMPLEMENTATION

HOW TO USE THIS MATRIX

This chapter lists all of the Recommendations from the previous chapters in a table along with useful information regarding time frame, responsible party, and potential funding sources. The time frames have been defined as short term (0-2 years), medium term (3-5 years), and long term (6-20 years). Responsible parties include the Town, meaning elected officials and appointed commissions, Hamilton County, the Chattanooga Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (CHCRPA), the State, and other organizations. Funding sources are generally classified as follows:

- Town:** General Budget and Capital Improvement Budget items
- Grants:** In particular, the State Departments of Commerce, Tourism Development, Transportation (TDOT), Environment and Conservation (TDEC), as well as, the Federal Government.

THE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

It is recommended that the Land Use Committee act as an Implementation Committee for the plan and meet at least twice per year to review implementation efforts and set priorities. The Implementation Matrix in this chapter can and should be used as a checklist to measure progress.

| Action No. | Action | Page No. | Time-frame | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
|--------------------------|---|----------|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 2 WALDEN'S PLACES | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Adopt the Town of Walden Plan as the Town's official land use policy and use it to guide municipal decisions on development proposals. | 22-30 | Short | Town/CHCRPA | NA |
| 2.2 | Update the zoning ordinance and other development regulations to align with the land use policy recommendations for the Town Center Place Types in the Taft Highway Focus Area (see chapters 5 and 6 for more detail on specific zoning recommendations). | 28-29 | Short | Town | Town |
| 2.3 | Add a pre-application meeting requirement between a developer and Town officials. | 21 | Short | Town | NA |
| 2.4 | Consider conducting a housing and retail market analysis to forecast the market potential for various residential and retail uses. | 21 | Medium | Town | Town |
| 2.5 | Consider conducting a fiscal impact and benefit analysis of the policies in this plan. | 21 | Medium | Town/CHCRPA | Town |
| 2.6 | Create a new zoning district with site and building design standards to implement the Taft Highway Residential Place Type. | 25 | Medium | Town | Town |
| 2.7 | Update the site and building design standards for the C-1 zoning district to align with the Taft Highway Non-residential Place Type. | 26 | Medium | Town | Town |
| 2.8 | Review the land use policy in the Town of Walden Plan every five years and adjust it as needed to reflect changes in community preference, market conditions, infrastructure, or other factors that could affect the quality of life. | NA | Long | Town/CHCRPA | Town/CH-CRPA |

| Action No. | Action | Page No. | Time-frame | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
|-----------------------------|--|----------|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 3 WALDEN'S TREASURES | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Complete a Wayfinding and Trailhead Signage Master Plan for the entire Town | 38- 39 | Short | Town | Town/Grants |
| 3.2 | Appoint the Parks Committee to serve as the steering committee for the Wayfinding and Trailhead Signage Master Plan | 39 | Short | Town | NA |
| 3.3 | Consult with mapping companies (Google, Waze, Bing, Apple, etc.) and other app developers to revise routings as needed | 39 | Short | Town | Town |
| 3.4 | Add a dedicated page on the Town's website with information on key civic sites and links to their websites as possible | 39 | Short | Town | Town |
| 3.5 | Install "Private Property" trail signage in all locations where trails cross private property | 37 | Short | Town | Town/Grants |
| 3.6 | Identify problem areas along trails where visitors tend to leave the trail and install "Stay on Trail" signage | 37 | Short | Town | Town |
| 3.7 | Identify erosion issues along trails and install educational signage to discourage further damage | 37 | Short | Town | Town/Grants |
| 3.8 | Improve the parking area at Mabbitt Springs | 26 | Short | Town | Town/Grants |
| 3.9 | Construct a new trailhead at Mabbitt Springs and replace the pedestrian bridge | 37 | Short | Town | Town/Grants |
| 3.10 | Work with the state to improve the parking area at Falling Water Falls | 26 | Short | Town/State | Town/State |
| 3.11 | Work with the state to construct a new trailhead at Falling Water Falls | 37 | Short | Town/State | Town/State |
| 3.12 | Construct parking area for the Pumpkin Patch near the terminus of Laurel Avenue | 26 | Short | Town | Town |

| Action No. | Action | Page No. | Time-frame | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
|---|--|----------|------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3 WALDEN'S TREASURES (CONTINUED) | | | | | |
| 3.13 | Begin early-phase implementation of the Wayfinding and Trail Signage Master Plan | 38-39 | Medium | Town | Town/Grants |
| 3.14 | Install trail maintenance donation meters at trailheads and other key sites | 37 | Medium | Town | Town |
| 3.15 | Complete implementation of the Wayfinding and Trail Signage Master Plan | 38-39 | Long | Town | Town/Grants |
| 4 SAFELY CONNECTING WALDEN FOR ALL | | | | | |
| 4.1 | Explore contracting with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office for strategic speed enforcement. | 47 | Short | Town/County | Town |
| 4.2 | Consider passing a three-foot ordinance for both pedestrians and bicyclists. For pedestrians, if no sidewalk or shoulder exists, this would standardize the right for a pedestrian to walk on the edge of the roadway. A passing vehicle must provide the person with a minimum of three feet or must yield to the pedestrian until able to do so. | 47 | Short | Town | NA |
| 4.3 | Identify funding opportunities for implementing identified priorities, including exploring the possibility of a dedicated local funding source for construction. | NA | Short | Town | Town |
| 4.4 | Consider lowering the posted speed limit on local residential streets from 30 mph to 25 mph to provide greater consistency across the Plateau. | 37 | Short | Town | Town |
| 4.5 | Approach the Town of Signal Mountain regarding completing the sidewalk gaps along James Boulevard near McCoy Farm and Gardens. Consider a cost-sharing structure to construct. | 45 | Short | Town/Signal Mountain | Town/Signal Mountain/Grants |

| Action No. | Action | Page No. | Time-frame | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
|---|--|----------|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 4 SAFELY CONNECTING WALDEN FOR ALL (CONTINUED) | | | | | |
| 4.6 | Evaluate traffic speeds and volumes as well as multimodal activity on the E. Brow Road. Implement appropriate traffic calming measures to support a safer shared street, such as signage and speed cushions. | 47-49 | Short | Town | Town |
| 4.7 | Identify areas along shared streets where graded shoulders (grass or gravel) may be feasible to provide additional maneuvering and/or refuge space for non-motorized street users. | 47-49 | Short | Town | Town |
| 4.8 | Install regulatory and warning signage along highly trafficked shared streets to improve driver awareness of the likely presence of non-motorized street users. Special attention should be given at blind horizontal and vertical curves. Key candidate streets include East Brow Road, Chestnut Avenue, and Forest Park Drive. | 47-49 | Short | Town | Town |
| 4.9 | Using wayfinding signage, direct northbound traffic traveling to Falling Water Falls State Natural Area on the W Road/Anderson Pike to use Wilson Avenue. | NA | Short | Town | Town/Grants |
| 4.10 | Identify funds and implement a shared street on Laurel Avenue, including a crosswalk at Laurel Avenue and Anderson Pike, until a shared-use path can be constructed. Construct connector trails on the Pumpkin Patch and McCoy properties. | 43 | Short | Town | Town/Grants |
| 4.11 | Monitor the outcomes of the envisioned TDOT feasibility study for constructing a Timesville Road-Shackleford Ridge Road connector. | NA | Short | Town | NA |
| 4.12 | Use the Roads and Safety Committee to identify which shared streets should be a priority for near-term implementation. | 46 | Short | Town | NA |

| Action No. | Action | Page No. | Time-frame | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
|---|---|----------|------------|---|----------------|
| 4 SAFELY CONNECTING WALDEN FOR ALL (CONTINUED) | | | | | |
| 4.13 | Continue to pursue TDOT's Multimodal Access Grant for constructing the envisioned shared use path along Taft Highway. | 43 | Short | Town | TDOT |
| 4.14 | Participate in the TPO's Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and/or TPO Board to actively participate in long-range transportation planning and policy efforts in the region. | NA | Short | Town | NA |
| 4.15 | Identify critical locations in need of vegetation pruning and/or removal within the public right-of-way to improve sightlines along well-traveled pedestrian and bicycling routes, particularly those frequented by visitors. Clearance may also provide additional maneuvering and/or refuge space for pedestrians in areas along certain shared streets, such as Chestnut Avenue. | NA | Short | Town | Town |
| 4.16 | Coordinate with TDOT to monitor when Taft Highway is expected to be repaved. Identify locations where crosswalks are preferred for installation, if possible. | NA | Medium | Town/TDOT | TDOT |
| 4.17 | Explore the legality of utilizing Town of Walden right-of-way for potential trail development and evaluate resident support for off-road connections. | 43 | Medium | Town | NA |
| 4.18 | Approach the East Tennessee Natural Gas Company to evaluate the feasibility of trail development within their gas line easement. | 43 | Medium | Town/East Tennessee Natural Gas Company | Town |
| 4.19 | Complete a follow-up evaluation of roadways where traffic calming was applied to measure the level of success. Identify additional measures as needed, as well as other streets that might benefit from such measures. | NA | Medium | Town | Town |

| Action No. | Action | Page No. | Time-frame | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
|---|--|----------|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 4 SAFELY CONNECTING WALDEN FOR ALL (CONTINUED) | | | | | |
| 4.20 | Evaluate the feasibility of a direct walking and bicycling connection into the new Walden's Ridge Park. | 43 | Medium | Town | Town |
| 4.21 | Identify short, low-stress connections that would extend walking and bicycling connectivity in the community, such as between Parsons Lane and the Wayside Presbyterian Church. | 45 | Medium | Town | Town |
| 4.22 | Evaluate improvements to the intersections of Fairmount Pike, Anderson Pike, and Taft Highway | 78 | Medium | Town/TDOT | Town/TDOT |
| 4.23 | Consider developing a pedestrian, bicycle, and greenway master plan, parks plan, or comprehensive transportation plan for the community. | NA | Medium | Town | Town |
| 4.24 | Identify a long-term speed enforcement strategy. | NA | Medium | Town | Town |
| 4.25 | Monitor the completion of the proposed Cumberland Trail segment north of Walden, envisioned to cross Taft Highway in Sequatchie County, to identify potential connections and opportunities to capture hikers passing through. | NA | Long | Town | NA |
| 4.26 | Explore pursuing the bicycle-friendly community designation from the League of American Bicyclists. | NA | Long | Town | Town |
| 4.27 | Establish the proposed passive park at Taft Highway and Fairmount Pike. | 80 | Long | Town/County | Town/County |
| 4.28 | Monitor the development and official designation of the proposed U.S. Bike Route (USBR) 121 in the Chattanooga region to potentially route through Walden. | NA | Long | Town | NA |

| Action No. | Action | Page No. | Time-frame | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
|---|---|----------|------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 5 A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT WALDEN | | | | | |
| 5.1 | Adopt supplemental standards to provide more guidance for protecting steep slopes from significant development | 54 | Short | Town | Town |
| 5.2 | Adopt stormwater management standards for the Taft Highway Focus Area that incorporate location-specific Light Imprint stormwater techniques to mitigate runoff | 54 | Short | Town | Town |
| 5.3 | Adopt lighting standards for non-residential and Town Center development | 56 | Short | Town | Town |
| 5.4 | Conduct a study to determine the effectiveness of a decentralized wastewater treatment system for development within the Town Center | 55 | Short | Town | Town |
| 5.5 | Work with Signal Mountain, Hamilton County, and Sequatchie County to develop a comprehensive sewer strategy for Walden and the region | 55 | Short | Town/Hamilton and Sequatchie Counties | Town/Hamilton and Sequatchie Counties |
| 5.6 | Adopt tree preservation and replacement standards in areas where growth is planned to occur, such as along Taft Highway | 54 | Medium | Town | Town |
| 5.7 | Work with TDEC's Land Reclamation Section to identify potential abandoned mine reclamation projects, which can be added to the Abandoned Mine Land Program | 57 | Long | Town/TDEC | Town/TDEC |
| 5.8 | Begin implementation of the comprehensive sewer strategy | 55 | Long | Town/Hamilton and Sequatchie Counties | Town/Hamilton and Sequatchie Counties |

| Action No. | Action | Page No. | Time-frame | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
|------------------------------|--|--------------|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 6 THE HEART OF WALDEN | | | | | |
| 6.1 | To implement the concepts for the Town Center, update the VC-1 district or replace it with a new district that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of appropriate land uses • Standards related to the layout of streets, blocks, and civic spaces • A minimum requirement for preserved natural open space • Building placement, height, and massing standards • Parking and access standards • Architectural standards • Landscaping standards • Signage standards | 60-65, 79-82 | Short | Town | Town |
| 6.2 | To implement the concepts of the Town Center neighborhood, create a new zoning district that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of appropriate land uses • Standards related to the layout of streets, blocks, and civic spaces • A minimum requirement for preserved natural open space • Building placement, height, and massing standards • Parking and access standards • Basic architectural standards • Basic landscaping standards | 66-71, 79-82 | Short | Town | Town |
| 6.3 | Adopt a development review process that includes submittal materials necessary to adequately review development proposals for adherence to development standards and this Plan. | NA | Short | Town | Town |

| Action No. | Action | Page No. | Time-frame | Responsible Party | Funding Source |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 6 THE HEART OF WALDEN (CONTINUED) | | | | | |
| 6.4 | Request traffic control evaluations from TDOT for key intersections experiencing peak hour delays, including Taft Highway/Anderson Pike and Taft Highway/Fairmount Pike. Begin discussion with TDOT Region staff regarding desire for potential roundabout and intersection realignment, as well as Taft Highway widening (i.e., addition of landscaped median). | 72-78 | Short | Town/TDOT | Town/TDOT |
| 6.5 | Participate in the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization's (TPO) plan development process for the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan. When they do a "call for projects", submit the Taft Highway project. | NA | Short | Town/County | NA |
| 6.6 | Develop a strong working relationship with the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA) and express support for updating the Walden's Ridge Plateau Area Plan, which was last updated in 1997. | NA | Short | Town/CHCRPA | NA |
| 6.7 | Work with the Land Trust for Tennessee or similar organization to develop a plan to place preserved open space in permanent conservation easements. | 82 | Medium | Town | Town |
| 6.8 | Evaluate improvements to the intersections of Fairmount Pike, Anderson Road, and Taft Highway | 78 | Medium | Town/TDOT | Town/TDOT |
| 6.9 | Revisit the revised standards in Walden's development regulations and update accordingly. | NA | Long | Town | Town |

APPENDIX *[public input record]*

As explained in Chapter 1, the public engagement process included multiple opportunities to provide input in the process. Early on, a series of focus group interviews were conducted. In May, an intense public brainstorming session called a “charrette” was held. At the beginning of the charrette, the public participated in a series of interactive exercises organized by topic, or station. Notes and images from these various sessions are included here for reference.

April 5, 2021

To: Steven Bush, Angela Cassidy, Andrew Hausler, Sarah McKenzie, Dawson Wheeler
Re: Focus Group Meeting Summary

The following is a summary of the Focus Group Meetings held on March 29th and 30th.

Focus Group Meeting #1: Non-profits

Melissa—McCoy Farm

Chad—Land Trust for Tennessee

Luke—Land Trust for Tennessee

Karen—McCoy Farm/Civic League

1997 Plans

- Karen was involved. Met every Friday for 5 years to do the zoning code which is why some are so upset.
- "The Walden Look" – Phil Walker. Bread Basket, Ace followed the Walden look. Unsure if ever adopted. (Karen)
- Spent a lot of time on the zoning changes after the 1997 plan

5-10-20 years – how has Walden changed?

- Very very little. Pop density a little greater. Newer younger families moving in. These people do not know necessarily know about the previous plans.
- 5th/6th generation of original families living here.
- Residents are willing to work and be involved in the communities. Young people don't recognize that the town has already been planned out, visions have been outlined, rules set up, etc.
- Little has changed except for population
- 2 acre minimum lots have kept development from Walden

What do you envision for next 20 years?

- Excited about connectivity possibilities
- I recreate up there a lot. Need trail connectivity. It's incredible on the Plateau.
 - Green Gulley, Cumberland Trail into Prentice Cooper.
- Fantastic outdoor community with the amount of resources there. Can leave your front door and be on a trail. Unmatched, really.
- Walden will be a Cumberland Trail town. It will essentially run right through town.
- W Rd at bottom, park with Mtn Bike Trails (Walden Ridge Park) coming. Will either be Hamilton County property or City of Chattanooga. Land Trust will hold an easement over it, so it can only be used as a park. Will be completed later this Fall.
 - Working with Mayor Lee for direct connectivity down to the park.
 - Construction underway.
- Trail protection will be important. How do you access these areas? Covid exacerbated the need for this given significant increases in use.

- Mayor Lee Davis – he's a dedicated historian. Tying history with the future – should be an important part of the effort.
 - Land between Mabbit and Falling Water Falls – its private property, they are building fires, cutting flowers, etc.
 - We want connectivity but where its legal.
 - Many trespassing issues
 - Lots of concern about connectivity through private property
 - Everybody wants connectivity. But make sure it's not on private property or that's its done with permission.
 - North of Lyness Ave across from Civic League -> triangle prop. People who own it allow people to walk there.
 - Desire to have a path down to Summertown from Civic League down Key Hulse, Wilson, to Summer Brook. Parsons Lane opportunity to take you down to Wilson?
 - Basic education about the trails is an opportunity in the future – such as, is parking allowed? How many spaces are there? Desire to remain a community park? How do you get the information out? Need to set use parameters. A lot of out of towners (out of state) come to the Mtn. The word's out. Rainbow Lake in Signal Mtn deals with use issues, too.
 - Mayor has formed a group – Parks and ROW Committee, wayfinding part of their effort.
 - Started looking at signage because of McCoy. We are starting on a plan. Presume the Town Website would be the central point of contact
 - Connectivity is good, but through private property is an issue/concern
- Role of your organizations? What should their role be in the future of the Town?
- McCoy
 - Our Board is really excited about the connectivity part of it.
 - McCoy is the jewel of Walden. Dozens of people visit daily. It's the heart of Walden's public space.
 - Bachmann Property
 - Civic League and Bachmann are similar in ways. We each have a building with an auditorium with public space, playground around it, etc.
 - Civic League started the former school.
 - Bachmann has a board, did a great job renovating the building. Have a money maker with the clothes store for income. People do like it but it does seem to be off everyones everyday route (vs McCoy).
 - Civic League – the bldg. is old (Mt Opry->they are defunct now), off the beaten path. Wonderful new board of neighbors who care. We are more of farming people, rural people
 - Direct path down to Mabbit Springs. We hope to get people biking from Civic League or McCoy to Civic League.
 - Comment on Little Brown Church
 - It's not a hiking spot or a spot for recreation. It's a church and extremely vulnerable (not locked, no one's monitoring it). We don't even put the address on the website for fear of what could happen to it. 400 come on to worship on Sunday. Popularity is already too much.

- Do the community orgs work together?
 - It is a goal of ours. On Walden Ridge Park – yes, lots. A lot of the low-hanging conservation fruit has been done, so now its large projects only so we are trying to build partnerships.

Village Center

- Town invited that village concept. It was a new idea in late 90s. We put a ton of effort into this. We were picturing what they have in Ooltewah. Grocery store is fine, nice restaurant, bank, etc. ok. It's more about how it develops. We did charettes endlessly. Everyone was so enthusiastic. It wasn't just 10 people. Some of the community felt betrayed as to why they didn't follow the plan. We had even considered a bridge over the highway in front of Town Hall.
- Village center – ok. It's about what it looks like, how they do it.
- Lyons family. Orchard, 4 generations. Asked to be in Walden so he could contribute his tax money to the Town.
- In the 1997 Town Center Plan the center was more in front of Town Hall.
- We all recognize that its commercial. That there's kudzu. Gas station on top of old coal mine doesn't make sense, though
- Environmental concerns. Plateau is a unique environment. Number of homes, amount of infrastructure – for sure needs to be considered. Certainly, should be doing our due diligence from a conservation standpoint. Does the development work?
- Taft Hwy – There's a bend – its turning around a bowl in the topo. Taft development will impact Middle Creek at the bottom.
- Middle Creek is beautiful. Beautiful blue holes. Important for drainage.
- People haven't built down there (bottom of Timesville Rd) because of the topography, water runoff.
- Walden invented the idea of village center
- Ootelwah development nice
- Approved development replaced our plan with a big parking lot
- Lyons would roll over in his grave if this happens

Focus Group Meeting #2: Connectivity/Mobility

Kristin Allen

Kirby Johnson

1997 Plans

- Wasn't involved although grew up there. Lived on ridge for many many years. Have been involved as a citizen. Interested in the LU and development.
- Moved here around 2016 from Atlanta. Newer to the Mtn.

5-10-20 years – how has Walden changed?

- Not as much a small, rural, quiet community
- Signal Mtn had the amenities, businesses and Walden was the woodsy cousin
- Walden doesn't have a ton of neighborhoods
- Addition of high school changed everything—more people moved here
- 2 acre minimum has helped to control development
- Lots of truck traffic—construction traffic
- Limited police presence
- Used to have own Police Dpt. (2 cops). Knew everybody
- Hamilton Co Sheriff now – don't have as much patrolling. With growth and construction, people come to take advantage.
- Signal Mt. helps with police calls because only one deputy serves the ridge
- Transient traffic → Little Brown Church, trail systems
- Seeing pass through traffic now. Significant safety issues. A little shocked about the fact that Ivory isn't on here (Mabbit Springs)
- Sacrificing our tax dollars as dollars go elsewhere. We could inadvertently have to increase property tax to meet our needs. Quality development might be the way to go that our community can buy into.
- Families moving with young kids.
- Pressure on our schools, roads, amenities. Worried about unintended consequences.
- Walden has natural assets and have been advertised
- 15-20 cars at Falling Water Falls
- Want to keep the charm of Walden, the woodsy quieter side of Signal Mtn.
- Division is about the balance of growth to not have to raise property taxes significantly.
- If could address parking, speeding, and some of the more transient nature of the people there, then people would probably be okay with visitors at FWF
- Speeding on Ivory, Chestnut, Forest Park Road – if could address this, this is huge.
- Enforcement of standard trail rules.
- Better gateway treatments to better define neighborhood roadways?
- Got rid of police department ~2002ish—better security would help
- Used to be stickers for residents (Walden, Lookout Mtn) so, police would know who is a local and not
- Lookout Mtn – there's a gateway with Branding of the Lookout Mtn community that matches car stickers.

- Could they contract with Signal Mtn police for security?
- Plateau – has become known as opportunity for crime because of the accessibility, no police
- There are no gated communities in Walden.
- We know have neighborhood watch in our neighborhoods (KJ)
- Need Neighborhood Ambassadors willing to do Neighborhood Watch campaigns. Local safety officer of sorts.
- Awareness campaign that we are not the Walden 30 years ago. We must do everything in our control to not generate crime issues.
- Not really an established media presence yet.

Connectivity/Mobility

- Other streets or roads, for better connectivity between different assets?
 - Brow Road
 - Wilson Rd
 - Fairmount at Taft – people walk here and then turn down Key Hulse Rd. Near the Civic League.
 - Lake Avenue – E Brow – a lot of speeding. Spring -> little brown church
 - Key Hulse Rd – Christian School
 - Miles
- **Worth conversating on connectivity with Signal Mtn and the back of the Mtn.
- Residents from elsewhere use our amenities.
- James at Taft – McCoy – very difficult to get across Taft.
- Parking has always been an issue at the Pumpkin Patch.
- Monetize access points or parking?
- Bachmann very underutilized. It's a beautiful building. Needs to be a place. Co-working spaces?
- Grocery store – the crux of the political climate. Resistance to change.
- A lot of differing opinions.
- Connectivity between Summertown and the Brow is important
- Ivory and Chestnut were repaved and restriped, but need it again because striping encourages fast traffic
- There is bad fog on the mountain so middle reflectors are useful
- Outside visitors are fine if you can address speeding along Ivory, Chestnut, and Forest Park
- Used to have vehicle stickers that identified Walden residents
- Need to contract with Signal Mt. for security
- There needs to be a branding effort for the town
- Need neighborhood ambassadors
- It is not the Walden of 30 years ago
- Walden is changing
- Interconnectivity with Signal Mt. and back of mountain
- Improved crossing to McCoy

Village Center

- Parking is an issue at the Pumpkin Patch
- Look into monetization of some parking

- The development project is probably coming to fruition
- Grocery can be part of the center
- More restaurants would be ideal—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—so you don't have go off the mountain
- The idea of a "Food City" might have given development a negative stigma
- It would be great to have guidance on how to achieve grant funding
- Need to hold developer accountable.
 - Verbiage around a strip mall.
 - Rossville Blvd. Don't want to be this.
- Needs to be socially relevant to our demographics. K-12. Early 30s. Up to aging population.

Focus Group Meeting #3: Neighborhoods

Barby Wilson
Kirby Johnson
Gary Smith
Gary Fiser

1997 Plans

- Wasn't involved

5-10-20 years – how has Walden changed?

- Taft Highway traffic has grown
 - Turning left onto Highway is getting more difficult. Might need a signal. Which was a concern for Timesville Rd
- Taft Highway corridor looks rundown and tired
- Looks like people don't care anymore
- We have lost our focus so am excited we are doing this
- Hard to separate Signal Mtn from Walden to me. Same is occurring there.
- Property maintenance issues
 - empty unmaintained commercial space
 - Empty gas station with buses
 - church for sale forever, etc.
 - Litter, trash
- Big change with addition of Ace Hardware
- Commercial is limited
- Connectivity to Bachmann may be tough because of heavy traffic on Anderson Pike
- There are unintended consequences of connectivity related to trespassing on private property

Biggest challenges facing the neighborhoods/Walden?

- Remarkable growth in the traffic and the number of houses going up everywhere
- Want to maintain the small-town, neighborhood environment and to keep it clean
- Assets becoming destinations for people off the mountain as well as on
- Experienced a lot of bicycling—enjoy seeing that—that's the draw for Walden, these destinations
- Bicycling is more prevalent—it's dangerous for bikers on Taft
- Transient population – not just those coming to McCoy
 - It's the construction trucks and workers—they have been behind the traffic and trash
 - W Rd clean up—Amt of trash was phenomenal from a lot of people that don't live on the plateau
 - Our community routinely comes together to address community issues.
- Maintenance plan needed for trails

Connectivity/Mobility

- Walkable, bikeable neighborhoods because of sidewalks
- Plans to connect to a park at the base of the Plateau

- It's easier to improve connectivity between some of the destinations between others
 - McCoy to Pumpkin Patch via Laurel Avenue
- Most important destinations to be connected?
- Bachmann hard to connect to because of traffic on that road
- Does connection have to be physical? Can it be on a website?

Village Center

- There are pros and cons
- Lookout Mt. center is appropriate for LM
- Village center needs to be appropriate to Walden
- Must be mindful of stormwater runoff and septic overflow
- On-site treatment is required
- Light pollution from any village center is a concern
 - Dark Skies Committee – we are starting with McCoy Property
 - Multidirectional lights there are an issue
 - Working with EPD and the Mayor.
 - I think we need to have some light guidelines on development.
 - Myrtle beach – all low light as an example
- Don't want a Rossville Boulevard character
- Like to see things tied together and feel like Walden
- There were 6 town center criteria—the grocery store does not contain any of these
- Want to know how they are going to handle the waste
- Timesville Rd up to curve – lots of topography issues—it's a coal mine area
- Only place that seems to be big enough to develop is that parcel at Timesville Rd, Mine Rd, old mine shaft
- There will be development of the site regardless of what it is
- Could be onsite water treatment facilities
- No matter what happens, it needs to be developed properly according to the context of the site.
- Whatever it is, I despise light pollution. I think its already too severe.
- Don't allow developers to drive the discussion
 - Needs to be driven by the town and the residents
 - We shouldn't cave into developers
 - This plan will give us direction and something to stand behind.
- Woodlands in TX
 - Code-wise – consider setbacks for sound and light
 - Can make development contextually-appropriate
 - Like the sameness for community character
 - Uniformly look and feel like Walden, and not like Signal Mtn. (flat faced rock) distinctly from them.
- Pruett's, Hummingbird, Country Club – where we see all of our friends but these are in Signal
- We need sustainable but relevant options that complement price wise or offering wise compared to rest of the Plateau

- We need to create a unique multigenerational brand for the Town. Brand statement and aesthetic would help us make more meaningful public spaces.

Focus Group Meeting #4: Taft Corridor North
No attendees

Focus Group Meeting #5: Government Agencies

Chip Baker (County Commissioner)

Boyd Veal (Signal Mt. Town Administrator)

Andrea Noel (TDOT)

Rachel Bergmann (TDOT)

Karen Hundt (RPA)

*All but Rachel live on the mountain

Working Relationship

- Signal Mt. very glad Walden reached out
- Relationship between agencies/municipalities is generally good
- There is some tension over Signal Mt. police support of Hamilton County sheriff
- Signal Mt. and Walden have cooperated—like helping with grant for Dog Park
- Seamless transition between Signal and the County? Yes, definitely working together
- Signal Mt. providing mutual aid to the Sheriff
 - We do get attention that they are using our services.
 - It's mutually beneficial—we assist them on a daily basis and they assist us (Sheriff)
- We are a mountain top community (Signal, Walden, County)—it's everyone kids
- Signal use of Walden facilities? Not really, but we have our own facilities (parks, open areas, etc.)
 - We have a facility similar Bachmann (Mtn Arts Comm Center)
 - Hasn't been a need for Signal to utilize those types of facilities
- Land strapped for Rec Fields on the Mtn

1997 Plans

- RPA staff were involved in the 1997 effort
- The 1997 plan had good ideas that weren't implemented
 - Taft widening, sewer extensions
 - Good to update it and reevaluate
- The Timesville/Shackleford connection study has been funded by TDOT but not completed

5-10-20 years – how has Walden changed?

- Residential growth is biggest change
- Must manage growth and maintain character
- A few things have been added (fire Station, Bread Basket)
- If you go off Taft, then quite a bit has changed
 - Residential growth significant and the High School fueled it
 - Rate of growth has increased since that
- 2-acre residential requirement in Walden which has forced growth outward
 - Greatest opportunity is in the unincorporated part
 - Unincorporated County is outpacing Signal and certainly Walden.

- Signal Mt. has some remaining large tracts on the north end
- There are still infill lots that exist
- Definitely have space for larger developments
- Wild Ridge subdivision is new since it was proposed. Majority of the build out has yet to happen.
 - Using new tech system on Shackleford area. Self-contained sewer system (like a package plant). Part of WDTA system but the developer built it.

Challenges to Growth

- Residential growth will outpace the commercial growth on the mountain and always will
- Two sewer options for WWTA
 - Upgrade the treatment plant at the foot of the mountain
 - Divert to Moccasin Bend treatment plant
- There is no moratorium on development, just on connections to the sewer
- Depends on what perspective you have—from Signal's perspective—challenge is how to manage the growth and maintain the character and personalities of the communities
- Don't let it ultimately change what these communities are
- Sewer not happening. So much need. Study was done (WWDA?) to see about using Moccasin Bend's capacity (making it more efficient)
- Next Mayor will move the discussion forward.
- Also approaching a consent decree that will address what has to be done to address the system
 - Improving the treatment plant at the bottom of the mountain
 - New management reevaluating the existing treatment plant
 - It's not a pump station—it's its own facility.
 - 2 options—next few months—will have a solid blueprint for what needs to be done
- Once moratorium is lifted and sewer connections are possible, people will automatically think new homes—but hope the growth of the sewer system will go to servicing already existing areas that are on septic (vs supplying new growth)
- Extending into sensitive areas is not a good idea for the environment.
- A lot of retro work that needs to be done before new work can happen.
- County development is all septic
- Not sure about step system but across the County seeing lots of smaller lots (to make the #'s work)
- Still seeing a lot of development in areas with existing sewer

Village Center

- Lots of retail/restaurants come and go
- Have to consider what's happening to retail across the country
- Focus on what we have and make it better—maybe go vertical and not horizontal
- There are opportunities for residential development on the corridor that could support a village center
- The center could be off the corridor
- Taft is extremely important

- Town Center could be off Taft so that traffic isn't impacted.
- TDOT's main goal is to keep traffic moving bc this is a major thoroughfare.
- Walden has a village center feel
- Density is not there enough to promote walking
- You must ask who is going to be using the center
 - People that live near Pumpkin Patch don't have kids
- Maybe change zoning to allow for residential
- Connecting McCoy from James Blvd. is tough
 - Have looked more internally within Town—had two grants to connect from James through Signal Mt. Town complex over to Taft with a pedestrian crossing and then a bike/pedestrian path through Taft Corridor—this was our approach to connect to Walden
 - Walden applied to pick it up at the Town Line and take it to the Pumpkin Patch
 - Signal Mt. rolled the grant funds into a larger sidewalk project in the old town center because of the timing of the project
- The gas easement through Fox Run in Walden could be an opportunity for a greenway/trail that connects neighborhoods west of Taft to east of Taft
 - Kids already use the gas line easement, they ride their bikes, play there
 - Not sure if existing properties would be open to it
- Pedestrian traffic along Taft primarily in Summer, kids coming from Town Center down to the shopping center.

Focus Group Meeting #6: Conservation

Mariah Prescott

Tal Cohen

Mary Beth Sutton

*All are on the Walden Parks and Recreation Committee

1997 Plans

- Wasn't involved

5-10-20 years – how has Walden changed?

- Length of time it takes to turn out onto highway.
- Traffic—there are a lot of cyclists that are on Taft, W Rd, and lots of roads throughout
- Not safe, especially with number of big trucks
- Traffic issues at Key Hulse and Anderson Pike
- Lots of cyclists—doesn't seem safe
 - Forest Park speed very difficult.
 - We need Bike lanes, ped lanes
- Answer is not to keep them from coming but give them more options.
- More litter on roads
 - litter problem is along the highways not trails
- There aren't a lot of trash cans around town
- Pumpkin Patch and McCoy Farm have been upgraded and that is good!
- More people parked at Pruitts, ton of people there—now it has become a center, people there all the time
- Pruitts crowd – more residential growth, construction workers—some carpool from there
- Stormwater is a huge issue—flooding issues because creeks rise and fall quickly
 - Mabbitt Springs is eroding
- We have sewage in our streams from all of the septic systems.

Connectivity/Mobility

- Tal – main goal early on – develop a community map with the parks and hiking trails, then leverage that to decide where we want to focus on. Only have had a few meetings.
- There is more traffic on trails
- Need to develop a map w/ parks and trails
- Need signage at trails
- Need to address parking at trails
- There are more walkers/bikers and traffic is fast
- Connectivity is great
- Stormwater is a big issue—clearing of plants increasing erosion
- Conservation
 - Increased foot traffic leads to sediment
 - Construction has increased runoff
- More people parked at Pruett's—construction trucks
- Need bike lanes/pedestrian lanes

Challenges to growth

- There is an environmental education opportunity
- Stormwater is a huge issue. Flooding issues bc creeks rise and fall quickly. Mabbitt Springs is eroding.
- We have sewage in our streams from all of the septic systems.
- Lots of invasive species—need to hold regular “weed wrangles”
- There is 1 ac. parcel off Wilson near Key that is owned by Town and could be used for parking
- Must balance parking/trails/people
- Mabbitt Springs is a pocket park, but Falling Water is a state park
- Sediment Load in Streams—Mabbitt—increased foot traffic in water that is not being funneled properly so sediment is increasingly

Connectivity/Mobility

- Since there is increased traffic with more people enjoying public spaces, need to take advantage of this exposure for education on environmental issues
- Utilize gas line easement as a trail
 - Contacted gas company but no return call yet
 - It was a thoroughfare for ATVs and goes all the way to Nolan, near the schools—but does go through a lot of property.
- Looking at ROWs not being used to serve as the connectors
 - Quite a few that are really great
 - Laurel Avenue connection—Town already owns it
 - Would like to connect into the potential gas line
 - End of Northern Ave goes down to Wilson—it's ROW, not a road
 - Landowner requested to close it but cancelled it
 - ROW goes into woods
 - Met with him with a proposed ordinance of closing to vehicles forever and leaving open to nonmotorized
 - He was not for it--was more concerned about vehicles coming up there.
 - People already walk on it. He has given them 'permission'
 - First section heading NE turns to dirt road to gravel. Turns off into the woods
- Connection—just better community connection
- Mabbitt Springs – looking at overflow parking areas
 - Using old ROW might be an option
- Parking on lawns an issue. Make recommendations on signage for limiting parking in plan
- We cannot say no to visitors. Some are Walden residents
- Town map should show parking as well as trails
- Consider parking meter donation boxes

Village Center

- Congregational space, but not a parking lot
- Shops and restaurants
- Ootelwah should be a model

- More green space than Ootelwah
- Can't allow quality of life to diminish
- Current stormwater regs aren't enough
- Need more shops and restaurants
- Current grocery store proposal is too big too much environmental burden
- Needs to be walkable
- Needs to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists

Focus Group Meeting #7: Taft Corridor South

Ardian Totten
John Rutter
Kathy Stair
John Anderson
Janet Laskowski
Sangler couple
Mike Dupree
David Housemann

1997 Plans

- 3 significantly different areas in Walden–Summertown
 - Residential is below grade from Taft
 - Hampton Rd area – 100+ residents.
- Fairly typical process from the RPA looking at horizon year growth
- Assumed commercial hub where Pruetts
- Population would continue to push out
- Done in advance of the UGB Law
 - Annexations anticipated in 1997 didn't happen
 - Have seen extraordinary growth going into Sequatchie Co plan
 - The next commercial node is at Timesville Rd
 - Neighborhood retail centers
 - Taft didn't get the expansion that was anticipated at the time + W Rd wasn't fixed

5-10-20 years – how has Walden changed?

- More traffic now on the mountain
- Hard to get out of intersection at Anderson and Taft
- Needs be a roundabout at that intersection near Timesville
- TDOT took over parking lot when added turn lane
 - Kept building roadway up, stormwater an issue
 - Impacts ability for people to pull out.
 - Consider something for safety twice. Our building has been hit twice
 - Created a hazard in the process.
- Walden is becoming younger
- Walden has gentrified
- There is resistance to change
- Need sensitive retail development
- TDOT says reroute of truck traffic is not possible so must maintain through-put
- There are good regulations for environmental concerns
- McCoy has visibility, but Bachmann does not
- Need to be careful with "paper streets" as they are still privately owned until the Town takes possession

Village Center

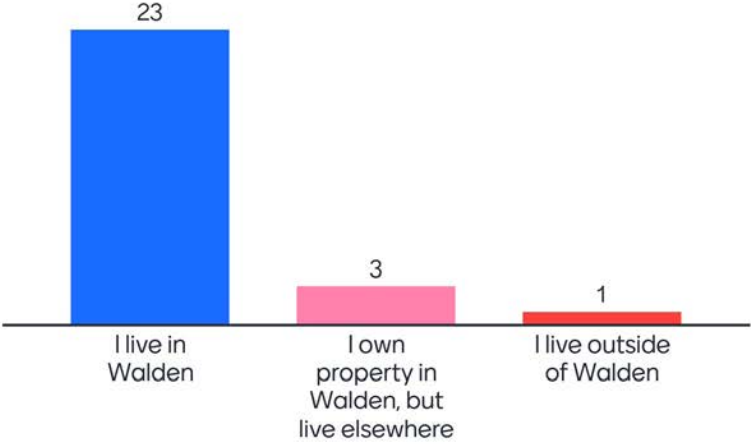
- Timesville/Taft does not warrant signal
- A decel lane on the south side is required

- Walden is tremendous for now
- Ace and Bread Basket faced opposition
- Retail anchor is needed to drive people there
- Need to keep people on the mountain
- Southern portion of the corridor is the core
- Should the town center go off Taft or on both sides and change Taft to a Main St
 - TDOT told us. Doing stabilization work on front of mtn because of rains
 - Reroute because of trucks a request, but t's a US highway—cannot do that unless alternative provided
 - Taft will always be a Federal Highway
 - This means the center is on one side or the other
- Retail development on Taft does not fundamentally change Summertown
 - Increases demand for homes, increases volume up
- Environmental—the rules in TN are not strong is what those people are saying
 - Hamilton Co doesn't have the education
 - Arguments without substance unless someone points to a major environmental failure
- Summertown residents are most vocal opposition to proposed development
- Bachmann doesn't have visibility—not fair to treat it as a civic anchor because you don't see it
- Bachmann is a destination
- McCoy is both
- Can't predict development to the north without knowing what happens with Timesville Rd—if that parcel doesn't develop then it:
 - Sends a message your money isn't welcome
 - Will impose so many conditions so that it's not economically viable.
- 44,000 sf – 2nd smallest grocery in Chatt.
- Final lawsuit hearing tomorrow.
 - Town went through the process. Applied for rezoning. Front 3 acres are already zoned commercial. I could already put in a gas station (not the highest, best use)
 - No landscape ordinance.
 - Village Center elements in the zoning were dated. It allowed 400x400 block development.
 - Since, that was designated. 1 property has been asked to be rezoned since then.
 - 4-hour meeting held in Bachmann. 200-350 people there.
 - We argue – this is not a strip center – double fronted retail and trees would never go in a strip development
 - Ordinance includes 23 conditions, including to approve the site plan, color palette (architectural), 2 traffic studies by consultant hired by the Town
 - Standard for review by a court. Is it fairly debatable, was there a rational decision?
 - Not about the intrinsic correctness.
 - Court: was the ordinance reasonably based and fairly debateable?

- If there is an appeal to stay a judgement they must post a bond to stop the development. The bond is 125% of the development's value.
- Connectivity/Mobility
 - There is a ton of open private ROWS that have been accepted by the Town of Walden
 - Subdivision plat–Future Development. A presumed dedication. Town can accept 1. Express legislation action or 2. Use the ROW or Open it to allow traffic
 - Annexation doesn't mean it accepts open and non-open ROW.
 - Can't really go through the ROW in subdivisions—only those living in there have the right to use. Should Town accept them all (responsibility and legality)
 - There should be no pedestrian traffic on Hampton. People walk on it. Not a safe road for peds.

End of Memo.

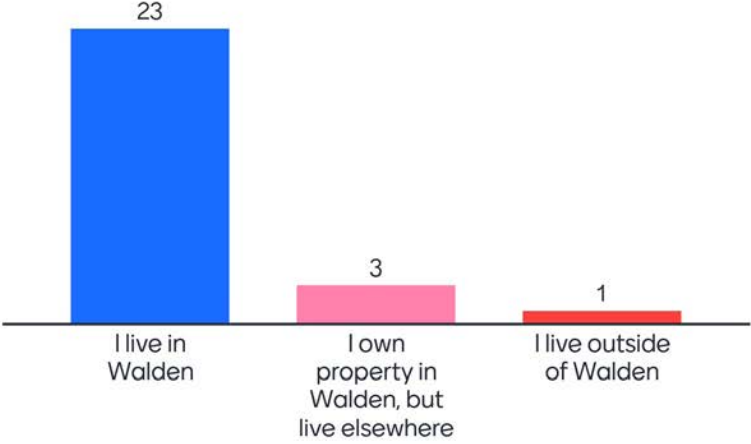
Where do you live?



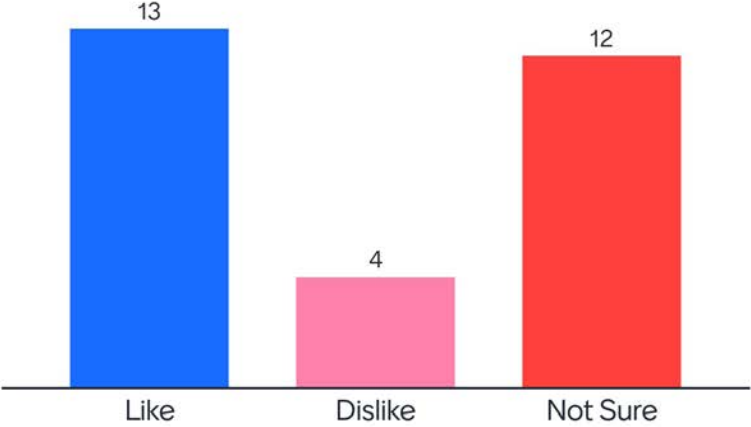
"places" exercise • leipers fork, tn (pop. 650)



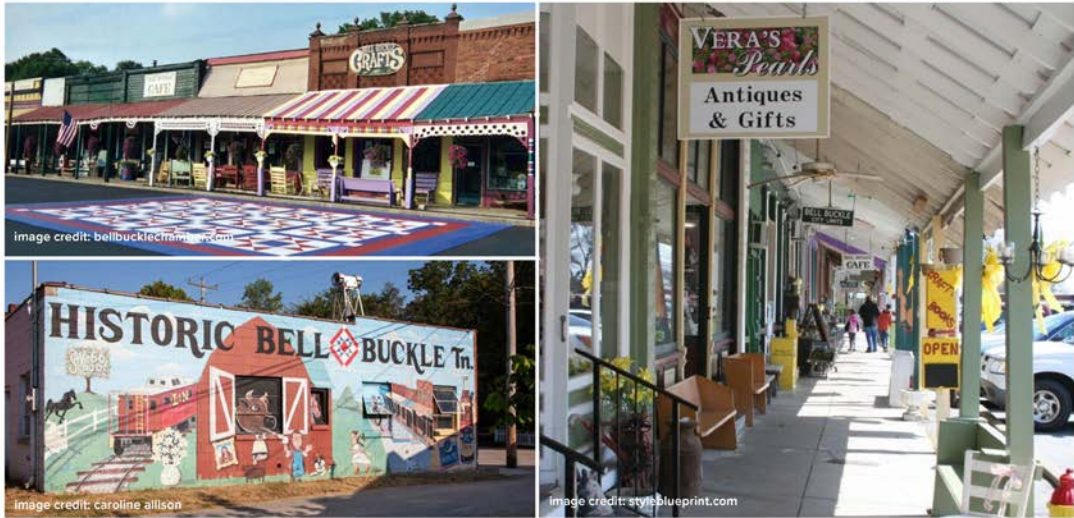
Where do you live?



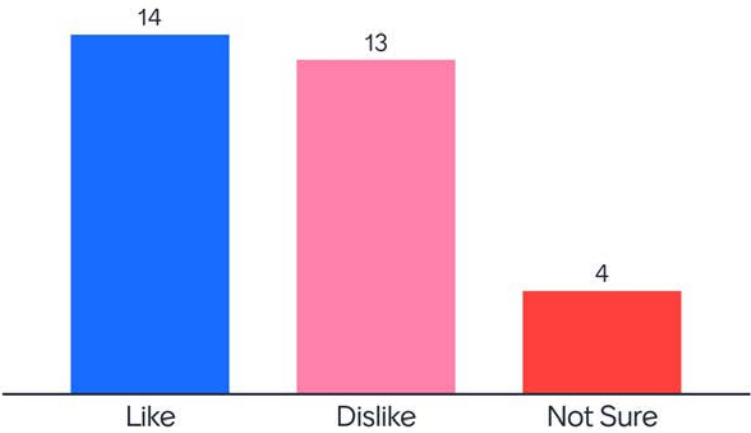
What do you think about Leipers Fork?



"places" exercise • bell buckle, tn (pop. 544)



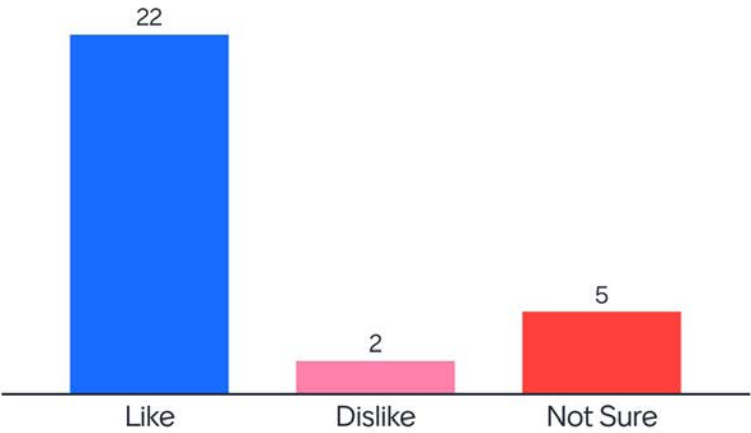
What do you think about Bell Buckle?



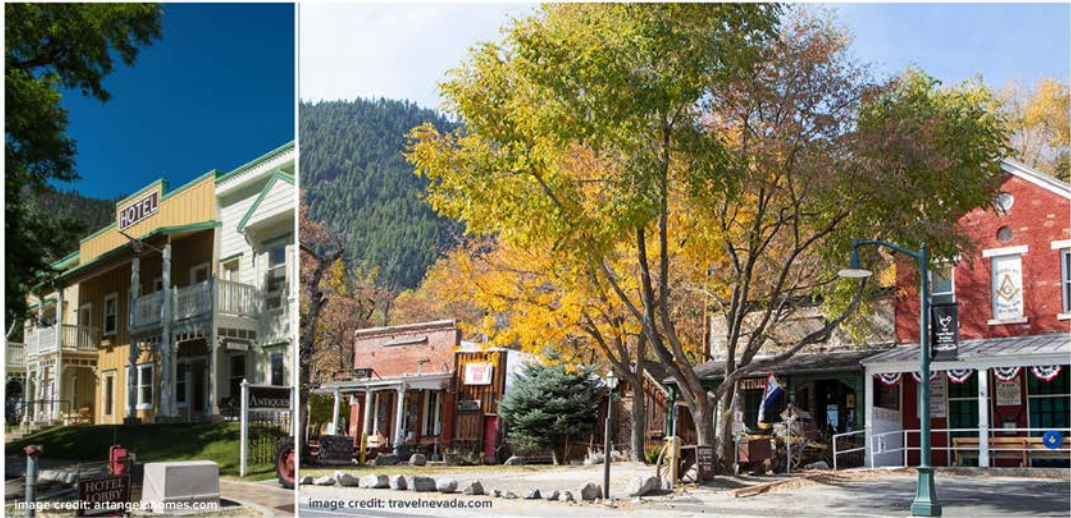
"places" exercise • cashiers, nc (pop. 137)



What do you think about Cashiers?



"places" exercise • genoa, nv (pop. 659)

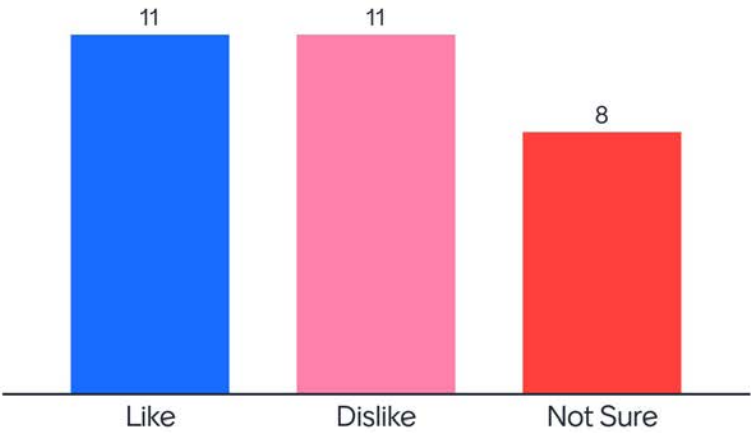


KC



What do you think about Genoa?

Mentimeter



30

"places" exercise • woodstock, vt (pop. 1,245)

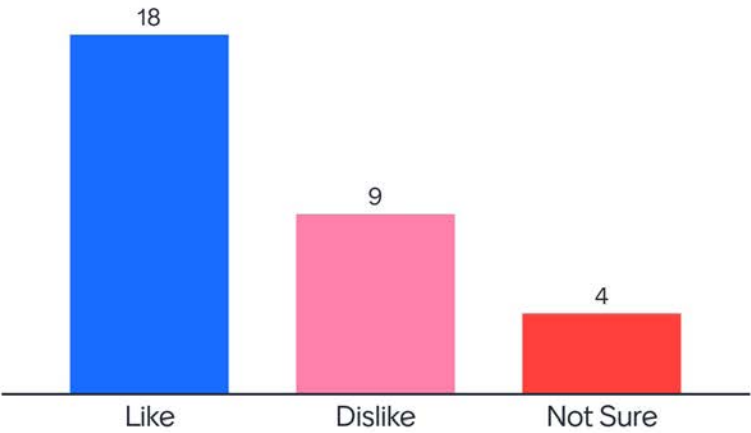


KC



What do you think about Woodstock?

Mentimeter

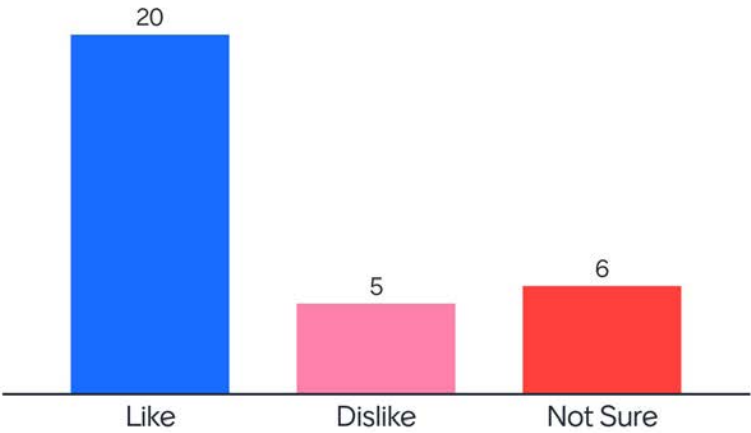


31

"places" exercise • blue ridge, ga (pop. 1,157)



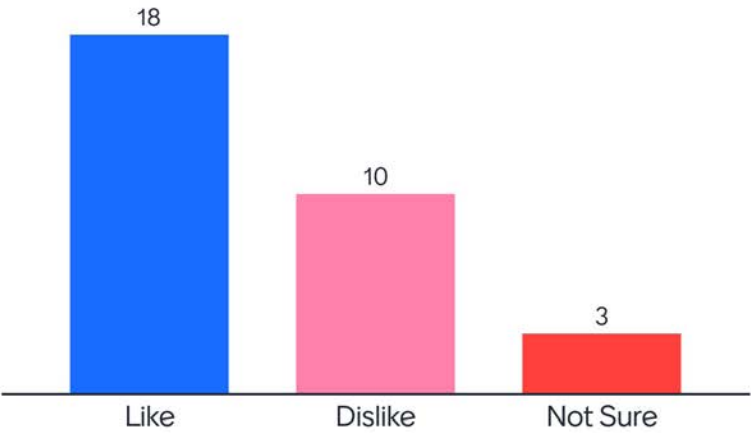
What do you think about Blue Ridge?



"places" exercise • blowing rock, nc (pop. 1,163)



What do you think about Blowing Rock?

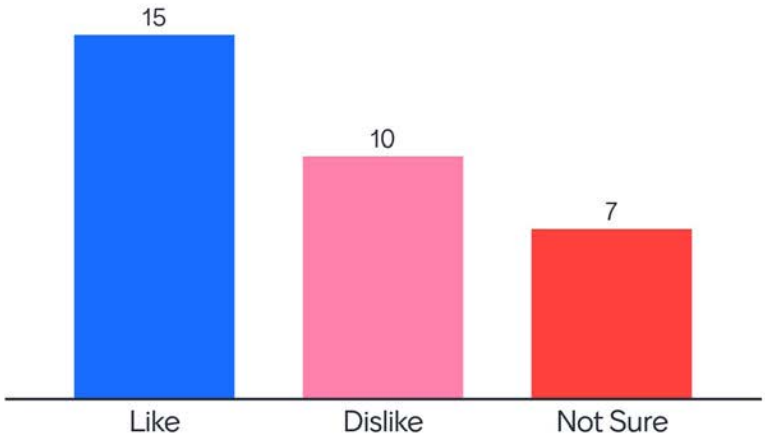


HANDS-ON WORKSHOP: PLACES EXERCISE

"places" exercise • cheshire village (Black Mountain, NC)



What do you think about Cheshire Village?

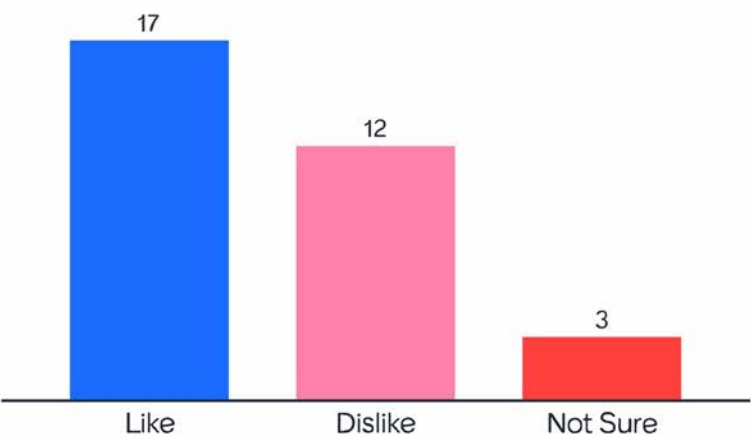


HANDS-ON WORKSHOP: PLACES EXERCISE

"places" exercise • cambridge square (Ooltewah, TN)



What do you think about Cambridge Square?

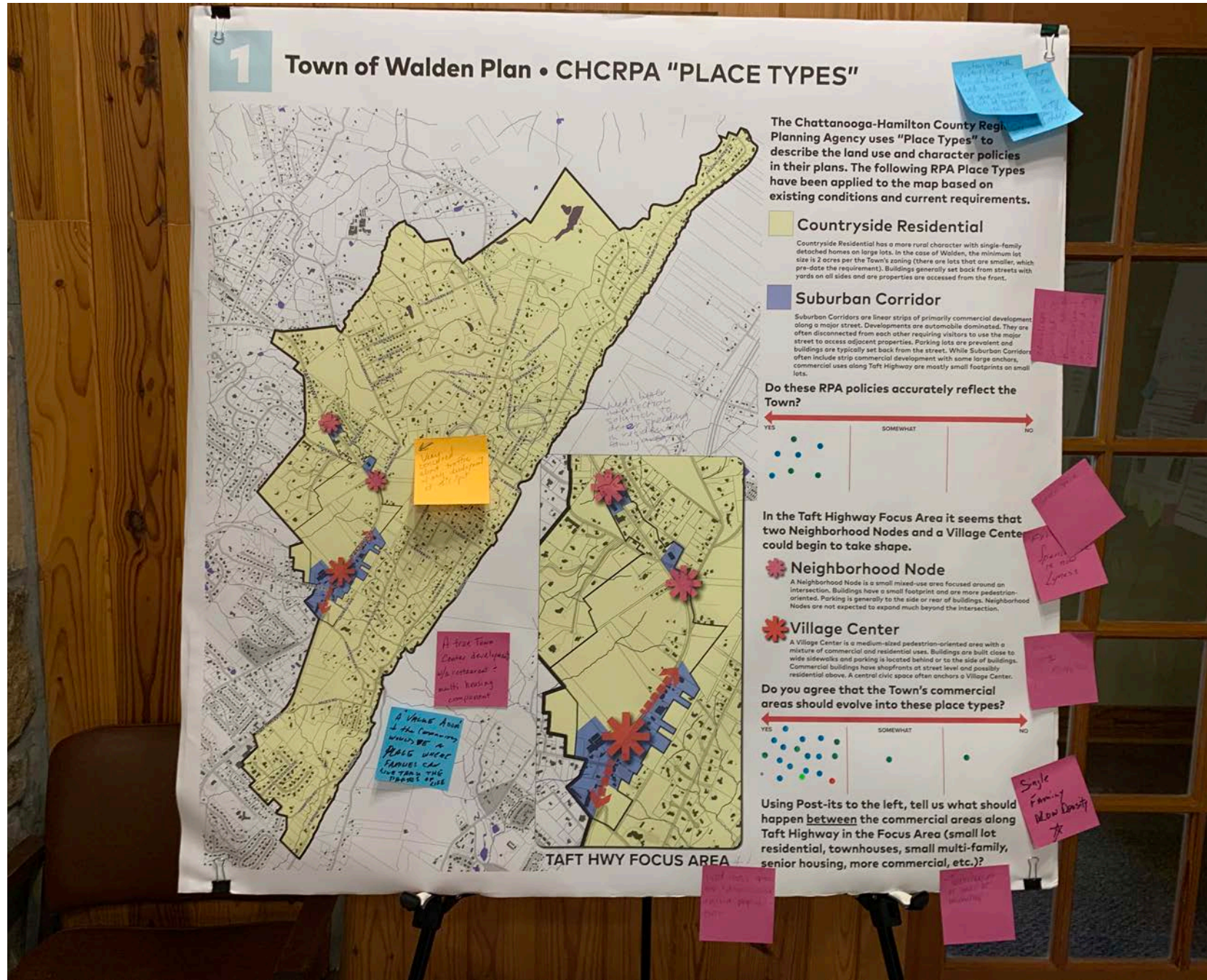


HANDS-ON WORKSHOP: PLACES EXERCISE

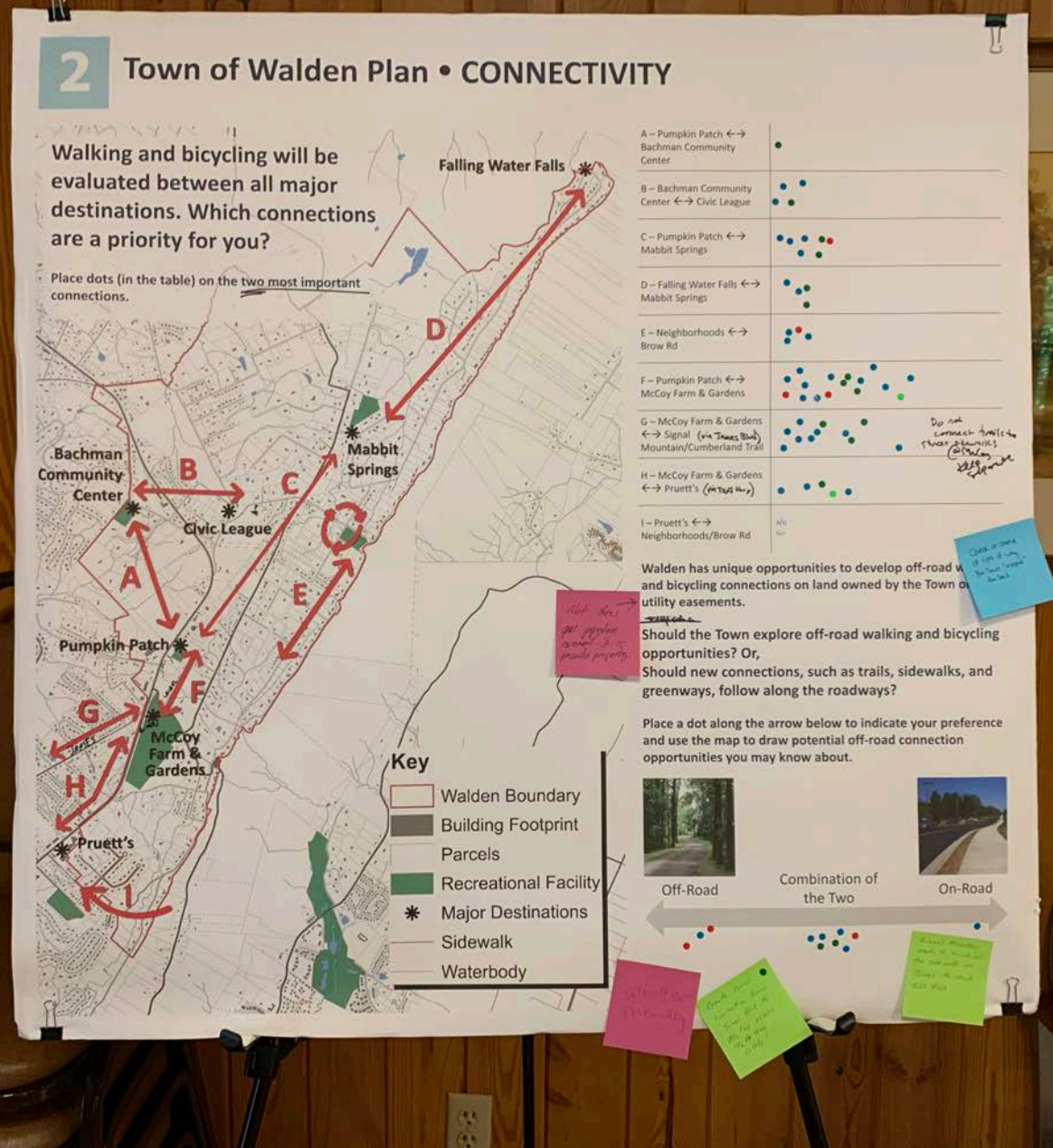
Are there other places that you believe are a good precedent for Walden?



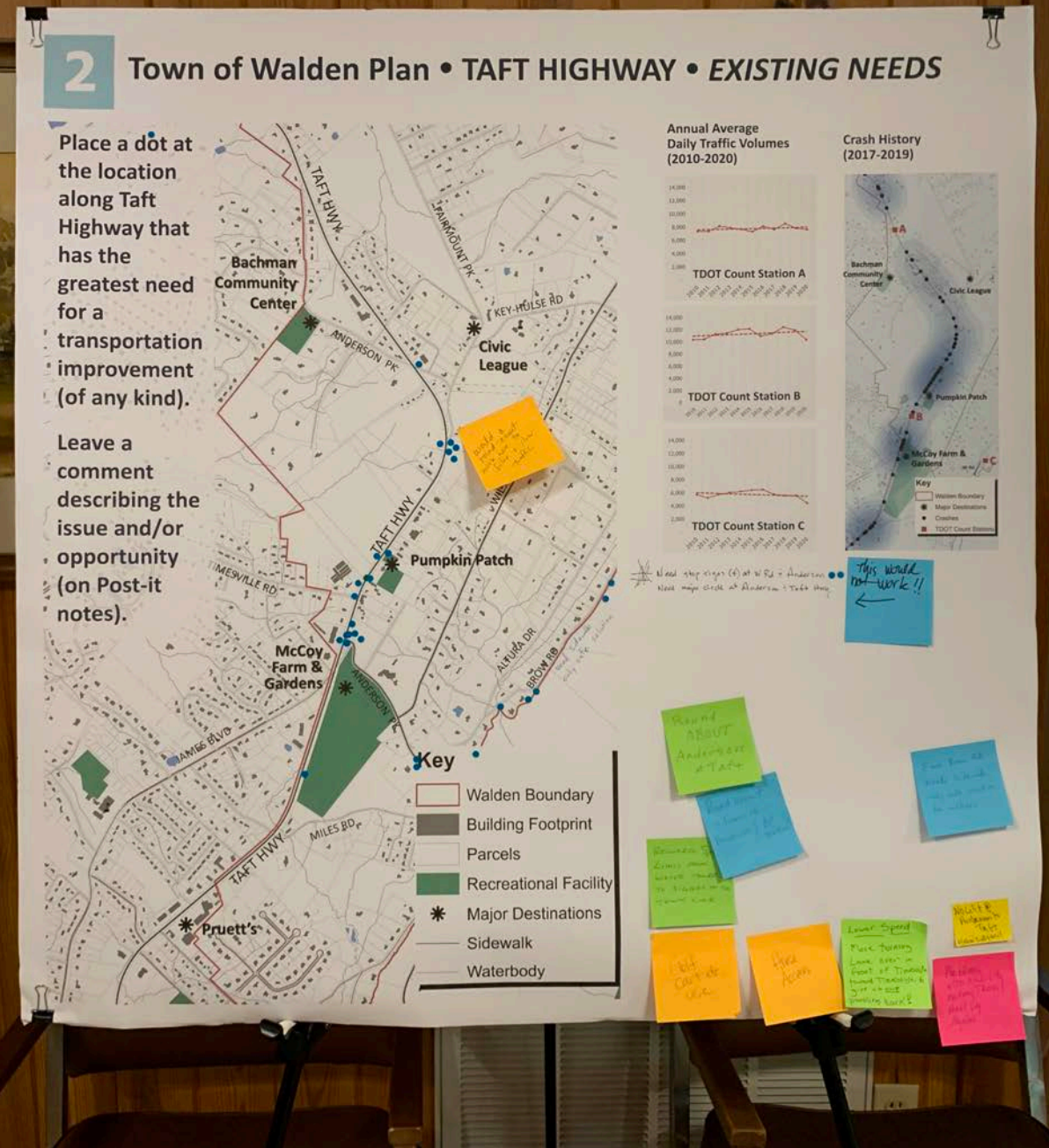
HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STATION 1: "PLACE TYPES"



HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STATION 2: CONNECTIVITY



HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STATION 2: TAFT HIGHWAY NEEDS







HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STATION 2: TAFT HIGHWAY CROSS SECTION

2

Town of Walden Plan • TAFT HIGHWAY • CROSS-SECTION

Place a dot on the cross-section that you prefer (or is most like what you prefer) for Taft Highway in the future as the corridor develops.

Below are high-level options to generate ideas and gauge interest in different types of pedestrian and bicycling facilities and levels of mobility for traffic within the existing 80' of right-of-way.








- Two-Lane Cross-Section with Landscaped Median (Median Cuts at Minor Intersections and/or at Standard TDOT Spacing; Turn Lanes at Major Intersections)
- Protected Bike Lanes
- Buffered Sidewalk

- Three-Lane Cross-Section (Landscaped Median Along Existing Frontage Road in Village Center)
- Protected Bike Lanes
- Buffered Sidewalks

- Four-Lane Cross-Section
- Buffered Shared Use Path
- Buffered Sidewalk

- Five-Lane Cross-Section (Landscaped Median Along Existing Frontage Road in Village Center)
- Buffered Shared Use Path
- Buffered Sidewalk

Facility Types



What elements SHOULD be included?

What elements SHOULD NOT be included?

What elements SHOULD be included?

What elements SHOULD NOT be included?


HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STATION 3: ASSETS AND WAY-FINDING

3


Town of Walden Plan • CIVIC ASSETS AND WAY-FINDING

Using dots, identify key locations for way-finding or other signage

(for other signage leave a note describing the purpose or content)



Is it important for the Town to prioritize way-finding signage for key assets within and adjacent to the Town?




VERY IMPORTANT

SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT

NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL

Is it important for the Town to prioritize trail signage for trails within and adjacent to the Town?




VERY IMPORTANT

SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT

NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL

Is it important for the Town to prioritize maintenance of key assets through signage, interpretation and/or donations?



VERY IMPORTANT

SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT

NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL

Use space below for other notes

Stay on Trail! Shortcutting is illegal and causes erosion

HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STATION 4: SUSTAINABILITY

4

Town of Walden Plan • SUSTAINABILITY

Using dots or Post-its
identify environmental
concerns in the Town
(feel free to confirm or comment on other's marks and ideas)

Use space below for
other notes

Is it important for new development to incorporate alternative
stormwater techniques (rain garden, bioswales, etc.)?

VERY IMPORTANT SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL

Is it important for new development to incorporate
permeous paving?

VERY IMPORTANT SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT NOT IMPORTANT

Is it important for streets to incorporate alternative
stormwater techniques?

VERY IMPORTANT SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT NOT IMPORTANT

business & Design
district

stormwater issues

HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STATION 5: TOWN CENTER LOCATION AND SIZE

5

Town of Walden Plan • TOWN CENTER LOCATION & SIZE

Draw what
you think
should be
the extent
of Walden's
town/
village
center.
(feel free to confirm or
comment on other's marks
and ideas)

What
are your
concerns?
(feel free to confirm or
comment on other's marks
and ideas)

Should Walden's Town Center
extend along Taft Highway?
(Place a dot below the image if you prefer this model)

Should Walden's Town Center
be off of Taft Highway?
(Place a dot below the image if you prefer this model)

Key

Taft Highway Focus Area

Parcels

Waterbodies

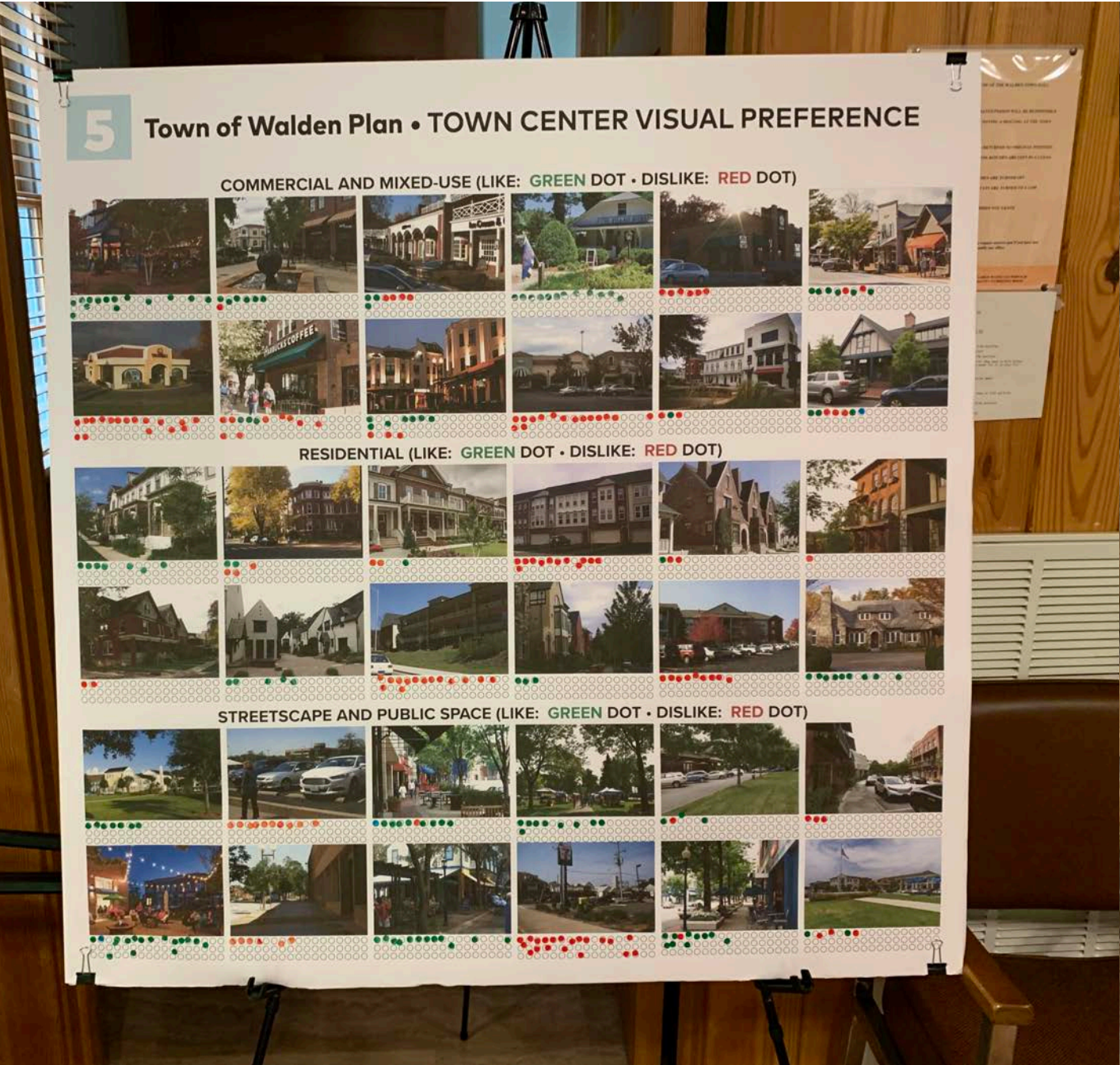
TAFT HWY FOCUS

From the old
RP building
to the old
Timesville Rd

the town
center
should be
located
along
Taft Hwy

the town
center
should be
located
along
Taft Hwy

HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STATION 5: TOWN CENTER VISUAL PREFERENCE



HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STATION 6: OTHER ISSUES

